This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

C 1344.9.10 (2)

HARVARD
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

THE

WORKS

OF

THOMAS SHEPARD,

FIRST PASTOR OF

THE FIRST CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:
DOCTRINAL TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.
1853.

44.40.3
C1344.9.10
HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
1859, July 18.
Gift of the
Cong. Board of Publication.
Boston.
C 1344.9.10 (2)
3104
49.91
14

TO THE READER.

If thou art one who knowest what it is to be serious in the great business of providing for eternity, it is very probable thou mayst be no stranger to the name of this reverend author, now with God, whose name in both the Englands is as an ointment poured forth; and then thou wilt be eagerly desirous to peruse these following Sermons, in tendency to the further increasing thy stock of spiritual oil; and when thou hast read them, and sucked forth the sweetness and nourishment contained in them, and, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, turned them into good and healthful nutriment to thy soul, we question not but it will enhance the author's worth in thy thoughts and estimation. But perhaps thou hast never lighted on any of those flowers which this holy man has planted in God's garden, and then we are confident thou wilt meet with such savory sweetness in this Discourse as will make thee wish Christ's church had longer enjoyed so choice and skillful a workman. If thou be one who hast hitherto little considered of God, and thy soul, and the concernments of eternity, or only now and then had some morning-dew thoughts of that which deserves and requires the choicest and most vigorous workings of thy soul, we wish thou wouldst so far comply with God's goodness in bringing this book to thy hand, and gratify thyself, — we mean thy soul, thy better self, — as to read

over this treatise, in which thou wilt meet with those serious and soul-piercing truths which, by God's blessing, may be as poison to thy lusts, and awaken thee to a serious and hearty engaging in that work which none ever yet repented of. For the occasion of publishing this piece, we refer thee to the larger epistle of our reverend brother, and only add, that though a vein of serious, solid, and hearty piety run through all this author's works, yet he has reserved the best wine till the last. The Lord help thee and us so to read and improve these and such like labors of God's harvestmen, that we may, with the wise virgins, have the lamps of our souls trimmed and furnished with oil, that, when the Bridegroom shall come, we may be ready to enter with him into his kingdom. Which is and shall be the prayer of us who are hearty well-wishers to thy soul.

WILLIAM GREENHILL.
EDMUND CALAMY.
JOHN JACKSON.
SIMON ASH.
WILLIAM TAYLOR.

24th December, 1659.

PREFACE.

To the Reader, and especially to the Inhabitants of Cambridge, in New England.

THAT to make sure of life eternal is the one necessary business that we sons of death have to do in this world, and without which all our time here is worse than lost, every enlightened mind will easily acknowledge; this present life being, by the rule of it, appointed but to this end, to be preparation time, spent in a continual care to make ready, that we might have a good meeting with Him who shall be seen in this air one day. And whether we look up to heaven, or down to hell; whether we reflect upon our own immortal souls, or turn our eyes toward the greatness and goodness of that God in Christ with whom we have to do; whether we pace over the time between this and judgment day, or send our thoughts to view the eternity that is to follow after, — all things put a necessity, a solemnity, a glory upon this work.

But *difficilia quæ pulchra.* It is one of the oracles uttered by our Lord with his own mouth, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." It is not so easy a thing to get to heaven, nor so broad a way thither, as the slight and loose opinions of some, and practices of more, would make it, nor as the carnal hearts of all would have it; though that, if it be examined, is the common scope of all erroneous conceits; and how restlessly have the corrupt minds of men labored therein in all ages, and do in these our days, to widen the way to life, to break down the boundaries of this narrow path, and make it broader than ever God made it! Man's

and fitting scribes not easily attainable in this wilderness, it has occasioned this delay hitherto. But we hope it will now be neither unacceptable nor unseasonable.

These Sermons are now transcribed by industrious and intelligent persons, and have been carefully reviewed and corrected. They are written out of the author's own notes, which he prepared for preaching, (only about a sheet himself wrote out in his lifetime, having thoughts, it seems, of yielding to their desires who were earnest for their publishing,) by means whereof, though the reader will often meet with curtness of expression, and though some lively passages that were uttered in preaching may be wanting, yet you will have this benefit, to have much in little room. It may also easily be observed, that not curiosity of words, but weight of things, was here studied by and flowed from the heart and pen of the author, which yet produceth the best and truest, i. e., a real rhetoric. In sum, although many imperfections, incident to such posthumous editions, can not be wanting, yet we doubt not but the work will speak for itself, to the intelligent and serious reader.

We are not ignorant that there be some who somewhat differ from this our author in accommodation of this parable, and analysis of some part of the context, referring it to the times about the expected calling of the Jews; and if so, the substance of the work may be accounted to be in a more than ordinary manner proper and seasonable for these times; but therein every man is left free to his own further disquisitions. Neither is it for the sake of the bare exposition, much less chronical accommodation, of the text, so much, that we publish these things, (in that kind the labors of others do abound,) but for the spiritual, practical, lively, soul-searching truths and applications thereof that are therein contained; the substance of which truths the impartial reader will easily acknowledge to be clear, both from this and from other scriptures.

These Sermons, preached by the author in a weekly lecture, were begun in June, 1636, and ended in May, 1640. In which time there was a leaven of Antinomian and Familistical opinions

stirring in the country, as the world has already in print been informed; by occasion whereof, the reader will meet with sundry passages tending to reprove and refute some of those conceits, and to establish the contrary truth; which we have not expunged, but let them pass mostly as we have found them; seeing it is no more than the world already knows, that there were such things then among us; and though that storm be, as to its open influence, comfortably blown over with us, yet the like errors are, if not latent among some here, spread elsewhere by the new lights of these times, whence these helps against them are still needful. And we doubt not but the substance of the truth here defended by our author will stand and abide the trial. Yea, I suppose I may freely take liberty to say, that among the many excellencies wherewith the Lord endowed this precious instrument of his, this was none of the least, that God taught him and helped him to teach others the true middle way of the gospel, between the Legalist, on the one hand, and the Antinomian, or loose gospeler, on the other, with much and sweet clearness, as was evident in the whole course and way of his preaching, and may in some measure appear both in his books formerly printed and in the following Sermons. Other passages, also, of special application to this country and to those first times of it, we willingly permit to pass the press, because they may be profitable to others in like cases elsewhere, and of special benefit to the New English reader. For why should we not desire and hope that the suitable, solemn counsels and warnings here given to these churches by this seer in Israel, in reference to the main matters of life and godliness, may now be of living, awakening, and soul-instructing use to them (O that it may be!) unto many generations?

Reader, if thou comest hither to carp and cavil, or to criticise upon each circumstantial imperfection, this work is not for thy turn; but if thou bringest with thee a serious and humble heart, desirous to have thy soul searched to the quick, the sores thereof lanced, thy spiritual work and way directed, and the interest of thy eternal peace furthered; if thou desirest to walk with God in good earnest, and escaping all the snares of a slight and slum-

bering generation, to stand before the Son of man with comfort in the day of his glory, then mayst thou here find that that will suit thee, and which thou wilt bless the Lord for, even words that are as goads and nails fastened by this master of assemblies, given from that one and chief Shepherd. The Lord fix and fasten them in all our hearts, that, abiding and being ingrafted there, they may be instrumental to further our salvation, that neither deficiency in the main, nor slothful security, may hinder us from our desired end; but when that chief Shepherd and that heavenly Bridegroom who now sends to us by so many servants and messages of his, both in word and writing, shall appear himself "in the glory of his Father and of all his holy angels," we also may "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away;" and, for the last consummation of this happy marriage, may go home with him to his Father's house, there to abide in his rest, in the "fullness of his joy," and drink down his "pleasures forevermore."

And you that sometimes were the flock of this shepherd, and have heard these things from the lively voice of this soul-melting preacher, whom you never can forget, let it be a welcome providence to have these truths thus revived to you and put into your hands, that he who is dead may yet speak to you and yours. Get them into your houses to read, nay, into your hearts to feed upon, as a choice and precious treasure. And let them still be a living and continual warning to you to watch and keep alive the power of godliness, the daily practice of working "out your salvation with fear and trembling," the love of the truth, the hatred of every false way, the esteem and improvement of God's ordinances, and the true, humble, heavenly life of faith in Christ Jesus.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

CAMBRIDGE, NEW ENGLAND,
December, 1659.

CONTENTS

TO

VOLUME II.

PART I.

CHAP.		PAGE.
I.	General Scope of the Parable,	13–16
II.	The Visible Church,	16–23
III.	The Coming of Christ and the Security of Professors,	24–26
IV.	The Soul that will enjoy Communion with Christ must be divorced from all other Lords, particularly from Lusts and from the Law. The Manner of its Espousals unto Christ,	26–33
V.	The Marks and Signs whereby the Soul may know whether he be in League or Love with any Lust or Creature, or married to the Law,	33–41
VI.	Motives and Arguments to persuade us into the Love of Christ, and to be espoused to him,	41–50
VII.	All Power for Spiritual Work from Christ,	50–68
VIII.	Christian's Duty of being constantly ready to meet Christ, and to enjoy Communion with him,	68–77
IX.	A fourfold Exhortation to Believers,	77–110
X.	The Soul's immediate Closing with the Person of Christ, as the proper Object of saving Faith,	111–143
XI.	True Believers do with Hope expect the Second Coming of Christ,	143–159
XII.	Believers do long and desire for the Appearance and Second Coming of Christ,	159–182
XIII.	There are Hypocrites in the best and purest Churches,	183–191
XIV.	A Discovery of Gospel Hypocrites,	191–206
XV.	There is a vast Difference between a Sincere Christian and the Closest Hypocrite,	206–229
XVI.	The Hypocrisy of the Heart proceeds from a Want of saving Illumination in the Understanding,	229–237
XVII.	Hypocrites discover themselves in an ineffectual Use of the Means of Grace,	238–260
XVIII.	The Hearts and Souls of Believers are made as Vessels only for the Reception of Christ, his Spirit, and the Graces thereof,	261–268

XIX. The Holy Spirit is in Believers as the Principle of their Spiritual Life and Holiness, ... 268–295
XX. There is such a Fullness or Measure of Grace in the Heart of Believers, which the most refined Hypocrites never arise unto, ... 295–302
XXI. A more extended Account of that Fullness of Grace that is in Believers, and how the most glorious Hypocrites come short of it, ... 302–351
XXII. True Saving Grace in the Hearts of Believers can never fail, ... 351–369

PART II.

I. Carnal Security in Virgin Churches, ... 370–384
II. Carnal Security comes by Degrees, ... 384–391
III. Security the last Sin of Good and Bad, ... 391–402
IV. Christ's Absence the Cause of Security in his Churches, 403–409
V. Christ's Awakening Cry before his Coming, ... 409–416
VI. The Certainty of Christ's Coming, ... 416–423
VII. God's Compassion towards Wise and Foolish Virgins, 423–429
VIII. Christ's Coming and his awaking Sleeping Christians, 430–437
IX. Christians trimming their Lamps, and Holiness the Christian's Glory, ... 437–450
X. Counterfeit Grace is not lasting, ... 451–457
XI. Unregenerate Persons may have a Sense of their Want of Grace, ... 458–465
XII. The Desire of Grace that may be in Hypocrites, . . 465–472
XIII. The Desires and Endeavors of Hypocrites after Grace are not lasting, ... 472–485
XIV. The Grace of one Person will not advantage another that wants Grace himself, and the best Christians can not dispense Grace to those that want it, ... 485–494
XV. The plentiful Dispensing of Grace in the Gospel Ministry, ... 494–507
XVI. Concerning Christ's Coming, ... 507–514
XVII. Christ's Coming as a Bridegroom to his own, ... 514–526
XVIII. Christ will not tarry when once his Time is come, and the Folly of such whose Work is then to do; and the Blessedness of Saints consists in immediate Communion with Christ, ... 526–549
XIX. None shall enjoy Christ hereafter, but those that are prepared here, ... 549–635

THE

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS UNFOLDED.

CHAPTER I.

MATT. XXV. 1—13. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

SECTION I.

THESE words are part of our Saviour's answer unto two solemn questions which his disciples propounded unto him, chap. xxiv. 3. The first was concerning the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem; the second, concerning the sign of his coming, and so of the end of the world. The first seems to be occasioned by our Saviour's speech, chap. xxiv. 2; the second, from his speech, chap. xxiii. 39. To the first, therefore, he answers, from the 4th verse of the twenty-fourth chapter to the 23d verse of it. To the second, he answereth from the 23d verse of the same chapter to the end of this twenty-fifth chapter. Wherein he acquaints them,

1. With some things which shall be before his coming, viz., subtle and strong delusions, mixed with sore tribulations and oppressions, especially in the time of Antichrist's reign, as also great confusions in all hearts and churches, if not throughout all the world, after the tribulation of those days; and then, saith he, verse 30, "shall appear the sign of the Son of man," and he shall be seen "coming in power and great glory;" but if you desire further to know the day and hour when this shall be,

it is such a secret as my Father revealeth not to any, no, not to the very angels in heaven, and therefore you need not know it, nor yet should seek to know it; it is sufficient for you to know that, before my coming, there shall be lamentable and sad times, and that when they are at their worst, that the sun and the moon, through the horrors of men's hearts, and the universal confusions in the world, shall seem to be darkened, &c., that then it is time for me to come and set all in order again, then the time of my coming draws nigh; now, this Christ doth, from verse 23 of the twenty-fourth chapter to verse 37.

2. Having thus spoken concerning his coming, he breaks off his speech in describing his coming, and falls to discovering the state of the times towards and about the days of his coming, and this he doth from chap. xxiv. 37 to chap. xxv. 31, by the consideration of which he persuades to watchfulness against his coming. 1. Either, saith he, the times will be very sensual and degenerate, as in the days of Noah, in some places of the world, chap. xxiv. 38, which he illustrates from two parables, persuading therefore to watchfulness, to the end of chap. xxiv. 2. Or there will be great security in other places, and among other persons, not given up to sensuality as in the days of Noah, but who are the chaste, virgin, pure churches of the world, not defiled with the whoredoms in the world; and this our Saviour unfolds in this parable. 3. Or if any be awakened, as some shall, to look for Christ's coming, yet among these, some through hard conceits of the Lord Jesus shall be willfully careless and not improve their talents for the sake and use of the Lord Jesus, and this is set down in the next parable of the ten talents, from verse 14 to verse 31. You see, therefore, where this parable stands, and to what purpose it is brought in. In which are two things.

Section II.

1. The parable itself, concerning the Ten Virgins, from verse 1 to verse 13.

2. The scope of the parable, verse 13, which is to persuade not simply to watchfulness, but to continuance and perseverance in it from a prudent foresight of the coming of Christ.

1. The parable itself is set down agreeable to the custom of those times wherein our Saviour lived, wherein their marriages were usually celebrated in the night time; she that was the bride was attended with sundry virgins to meet the bridegroom; these virgins, it being the night season, took therefore their lamps with them; those that were ready, and met the bridegroom, were

admitted to the marriage room and supper; those that came after that time, if once the doors were shut, were surely kept out though they knocked hard to come in. All this, those who are acquainted with Jewish histories and customs know to be true, which we are to attend, because it gives not a little light to the true and genuine explication of this parable.

In which parable note these two parts.

1. The church's preparation to meet with Christ, called here the bridegroom, from the 1st to the 5th verse.

2. The bridegroom's coming forth to meet them, from the 5th to the 12th verse.

Section III.

The First Part of the Parable.

First, I shall speak of the preparation made by the church to meet with Christ Jesus. Wherein also note these three things.

1. The place where this preparation is made, viz.: in "the kingdom of heaven," verse 1.

2. The time when it shall be made, set down in the first word, "Then," verse 1.

3. The persons that shall make this preparation; they shall not be corrupted members of degenerate churches, where men's profession is grown foul through length of wearing; but they are professors of some eminent strain, some whereof are truly sincere, others secretly unsound; and there is a double description of them. 1. From some things wherein they all agree. 2. From some other particulars wherein they manifestly differ.

First, Those things wherein they all agree are three.

1. They are all virgins; virgin professors.

2. They were all awake and watchful for some time, ready to meet the bridegroom; and hence it is said, "They took their lamps."

3. They all had so much faith as to go out to meet the bridegroom.

Secondly, Those things wherein they did differ are,—

1. Generally, "five were wise" and "five were foolish," verse 2.

2. Specially, the foolish took lamps, but no oil; the wise did both, verses 3, 4.

This is the rude draught of the first part of the parable, the sum whereof is this: that the state of the members of some churches, about the time of Christ's coming, shall be this — that

they shall not be openly profane, corrupt, and scandalous, but virgin professors, awakened for some season out of carnal security; stirring, lively Christians, not preserving their chastity and purity merely in a way of works, but waiting for Christ in a covenant of grace; only some of these, and a good part of these, shall be indeed wise, stored with spiritual wisdom, filled with the power of grace; but others of them, and a great part of them too, shall be found foolish at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

I come, therefore, to handle the first particular in this part, viz., —

CHAPTER II.

OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF GOD.

SECTION I.

1. THE place where this preparation to meet Christ shall be made, and that is not in the kingdoms of this world, (earthly kingdoms,) but in the kingdom of heaven; and therefore it is said, "The kingdom of heaven shall be like," etc.

I will not trouble you with telling you how many ways the kingdom of heaven is taken in Scripture: by kingdom of heaven, here, is not meant the kingdom of glory in the third heaven, for there shall be no foolish virgins at all there; no unclean thing shall enter thither; nor by it is meant the head of this kingdom, viz., Christ Jesus, for how can he be like to ten virgins? nor by it is meant the gospel of the kingdom which (Matt. xiii.) is called the "kingdom of heaven," and compared to a draw net, for how can it be like unto ten virgins? nor yet the internal kingdom of grace kept up in the heart of every believer, which is called a grain of mustard seed, (Matt. xiii.,) for how can any foolish virgins be there? or what share have they in that? Therefore, I conceive, it is clear that by the kingdom of heaven, here, is meant the external kingdom of Christ in this world; that is, the visible church, or the estate of the visible church, which is frequently called in Scripture "the kingdom of heaven," as Matt. viii. 12, and xxi. 43. In which kingdom some are wise, some foolish; all profess Christ, look for the coming of Christ, for salvation from Christ. The estate of this visible church shall be like ten virgins.

Section II.

And hence I shall note this one thing.

Doctrine 1. That the visible church of God on earth, especially in the times of the gospel, is the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

For look upon the face of the whole earth; there you may see the kingdoms of men, and the kingdom of Satan, sin, and death, which the apostle saith (Rom. v.) reigneth over all men; here is only the kingdom of heaven upon earth, viz., in the visible church. It is not the place only which makes either heaven or hell, though there is a place for both, but the state principally makes both. One may be in hell upon earth, as Christ was in his bitter agony; and a man may be in a kind of heaven upon earth, as Christ tells his hearers that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand;" a man may be under the kingdom of Satan and darkness upon earth, (Col. i. 13.) which is a kind of hell; and why not as well under the kingdom of God on earth, which is a kind of heaven? especially, I say, now under the gospel, wherein the Lord hath begun to fulfill that which was but only promised under the Old Testament to be fulfilled in the fourth and last monarchy (Dan. ii. 44) in the time of the New; in the state of Christ's visible church, which should, by little and little, beat down all other kingdoms of the world.

Section III.

Reason 1. Because the same King that is reigning in heaven is reigning here, is present here, (Ps. ii. 6;) and here the saints are commanded to rejoice, to shout, and to be glad with all their hearts, because of the presence of this their King among them. Zeph. iii. 14, 15. It is true, indeed, he is King over all the world. The immediate execution of all God's common, as well as special, providence is put into the hand of this King, the Lord Jesus. But as for his enemies, and other creatures, he reigns over them as a King of power, but he reigns not for them also as a King of grace and love; for thus he reigns among his people in his church. Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27. The Lord is present with every one of his people severally, but much more jointly when two or three of them are met together in his name.

Reason 2. Because here are the laws of heaven. Heb. xii. 25. Take heed—speaking of the ministry of the gospel in the churches—that you refuse not to hear Him who speaketh from heaven, which laws are not only here promulgated, (as they be among the enemies of this kingdom,) but accepted and received also, without which laws what kingdom could there be?

Christ's kingdom in this world is neither tyrannical nor arbitrary to govern without law. No, no; but if he be our King, he is our Lawgiver also. Is. xxxiii. 22. Nay, the same laws by which we shall be ruled in heaven we have here, and we are now under; that, as our divines say against the Papists, though before Moses' time there was not *scriptio verbi*, yet there was *verbum scriptum*, which the patriarchs had before the flood, and afterward until Moses' time; so I say here, though in heaven the external letter and scription both of law and gospel shall be abolished, because they need them not when the day star is risen, (2 Pet. i. 19,) yet the living rules of both, for substance, shall remain; the end of the ministry is to bring us to the unity of faith in a perfect estate. Eph. iv. 13. Therefore faith shall not cease when ministers shall, and that perfect man shall come. Our faith, indeed, shall not then, by such glasses, see Christ, nor adhere unto Christ by such means of promises and ordinances as we do now; but, without them, we shall both see and forever adhere to Him who is our King at that day; and though, indeed, the law is now abolished as a covenant of life, yet it shall ever remain as a rule of life. Perfect subjection to it is the happiness of saints in heaven, (1 John i.,) as a heart contrary to it is the greatest misery of the saints on earth. Rom. vii. 24.

Reason 3. Because here are the subjects of heaven. Eph. ii. 19. Fellow-citizens of the saints, not only on earth, but, as Paul speaketh, (Philip. iii. 20,) "Our conversation (or, as it may be rendered, our free burgess-ship) is in heaven." God himself hath canonized all the true members of visible churches with the name of saints throughout the whole New Testament; here are the great heirs of heaven; nay, possessors of heaven by faith, as others are by feeling, as near and dear to God, in some respect, as those that be in heaven already; because the same motive which makes him love them makes him love these, though poor abjects and outcasts of the world. There is but a paper wall of their bodies between them and heaven, only here is the difference — they there are subjects in their own country; these here are the same countrymen, only strangers for a time here upon earth. Some define a kingdom to be *dominatus regis in populum subjectum*. If Christ, the King, was present, and his laws published, but there were no people to be subject to him, there could be no kingdom; but when the King, laws, and subjects of heaven are here met together in the visible church, here is now the kingdom of heaven.

Reason 4. Because here is the very glory of heaven begun, that look as the same sun which fills the stars with glory; the

very same beams touch the earth also, so the same glory which shines in heaven shines into the poor church here. 1 Pet. v. 10. God hath called his people into his eternal glory. And (Rom. viii. 30) "Whom Christ hath justified, them he hath glorified;" i. e., he hath begun it here; here, in a special manner, is the presence of the angels in heaven. Eph. iii. 10. Here the pure in heart see God, and that after another manner than many times they can in their solitary condition. Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. And what is this but heaven?

Section IV.

Use 1. See, therefore, hence their happiness and honor whom God hath called out of the world, and planted in his church. What hath the Lord done, but opened the way to the tree of life, and let you into paradise again? Nay, which is more, what hath he done but taken you up into the very kingdom of heaven itself, where you have the Lord of glory to be your King, the laws of heaven made known; his heart opened, where you have the heirs of heaven your companions, and the angels of heaven your guard, desiring to look into those things which your eyes see and your hearts feel. 1 Pet. i. 12. Where you have the love of a Father appearing, the Son of God inhabiting, and the Spirit of heaven comforting. "Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him!" That when the Lord seeth it unmeet to take you out of this world up into heaven, that heaven should come down into this world unto you, who were once enemies to this kingdom, shut up under the kingdom of death and darkness, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, without God and Christ in the world, without promise, without hope. I do not cry the temple of the Lord, nor idolize order and churches; but I tell you what your privilege is, and thereby what God's goodness is. I know the world neither seeth nor feeleth any such heaven on earth, but soon grow despisers secretly of all ordinances, who, if they were in heaven itself, with their carnal hearts, they would not abide there with much contentment; yet, verily, heaven hath been and is found here by God's hidden ones, even such things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard; and if it be not thus with thee, blame thyself, and mourn the more, who, in the midst of light, art in utter darkness; and in the place where heaven is begun to some, it should be made a little hell to thee.

Use 2. Take heed of defiling secretly the church of God. For what do you thereby but pollute the kingdom of heaven itself? and the better any thing is, the greater is the defilement cast upon it. It is said (1 Pet. i. 4) that the kingdom of heaven above

is "an inheritance undefiled," * never yet the subject-place where any sin was committed, and this is one part of the glory of it. Take you heed of coming into church fellowship with defiled hearts, and so defiling God's holy things; for do you know where you are? I know it is not in that heaven where you can not sin, but yet it is in such a heaven where you should not sin, much less defile the church of God. It was one of God's heavy indictments against the church of the Jews, that when the Lord had brought them out of a land of pits into a plentiful country, yet they defiled his land; neither priests nor people said, "Where is the Lord?" Jer. ii. 6, 8. It will be much more heavy another day with you that, walking in the fellowship of God's people, shall be found guilty of defiling the kingdom of heaven itself, which you should be careful to keep as an undefiled inheritance, which defilements, whether spiritual or sensual, as they stain the very glory of heaven itself, so they keep you from feeling the truth of this doctrine, even of this heaven upon earth in your own experience.

Use 3. Let all members of churches hence learn to have their conversation in heaven, and walk as men come down from heaven and returning thither again; and that as it were already in heaven. Paul did thus, and wept to see so many that did not thus, but did "mind earthly things." Philip. iii. 19, 20. Do not only forsake, but even "forget your country, and your father's house; so shall the King of glory desire your beauty." Ps. xlv. 10, 11. Let the reproach of earthly mindedness, cast upon the face of Christians, be wiped off by your carriage being heavenly, holy, loosened from things below. Art thou in heaven with an earthly heart? Is not heaven good enough for thee? Can not that content thee which many have desired to see, and could not see, even the Lord Jesus, the King of glory in his beauty, in the assemblies of his saints?

Use 4. Take heed of pulling down this kingdom. Loyal subjects will rather lose their lives than their prince shall lose his kingdom. Fear not enemies without, but yourselves at home. The enemies of the church did never yet hurt the church, but the church's sins. Zech. vii. 4. O, consider what mercy the Lord hath betrusted us withal, that unless the Lord should carry us to heaven itself, immediately on the wings of angels, he can show us no greater outward favor, in this world, than to bring us into this his kingdom of heaven on earth. I profess one

* Some think from thence, that the lapsed angels did not fall in the third heaven, but in some place in the earth; for that is an inheritance undefiled.

day's fellowship here with a number of broken-hearted Christians, either mourning together or rejoicing in their God and King together, it outbids the many years' glory of the whole world, howsoever it is hidden from the world. And will you betray this kingdom?

Section V.

Quest. What are those things that may pull down this kingdom?

Ans. 1. Ignorance of those sins which may hurt and ruin it. There are common infirmities which all the faithful have in common, for the Lord pities his; but there are some that are proper and personal to some particular persons, (Ps. xviii. 23,) for which the Lord is even angry with his own; so there are some sins which are common church infirmities, for which the Lord will not cast off his people; but there are sometimes in several churches proper church sins. Now, the rule here is, if these be not seen, and lamented, and removed; if the Lord be angry for these, as verily he will, and yet they do not so much as know all this while what it is that hurts them, these sins will canker the roots, and blast the most flourishing churches. Ephesus (Rev. i. 4) had her sin; Sardis (Rev. ii. 1) had her sin; Laodicea had her sins. Rev. iii. 16. Now, what if they never know these, nor repent of these; you know then Ephesus' candlestick must be removed, and Laodicea must be spued out of Christ's mouth. O, this hath been the bane of churches, while they enjoyed their liberties, they could not — nay, in truth would not — know their all in the day of Christ's visitation of them, and hence came their ruin, the cause of which they saw not; only it may be, the remnant that escaped, to whom the Lord showed mercy, could read their sins in their plagues. It is a lamentable spectacle to behold the ruins of Germany, and that, after such great slaughter and effusion of blood, they can not tell the thing that hath hurt and doth still waste them.

2. Self-seeking, a spirit of self. Look as it is in a kingdom, if there be a common enemy, and the body of the army should encounter with them, be every man taken up, and taking thought how he may preserve his own tent, and do not join their forces together for common safety, it must perish, and the kingdom will be easily conquered; or, as it is with the body, if every member seeks to preserve itself alone, and not that which preserves them all, (viz., the head,) the body will drop down and die shortly. Christ Jesus is at the head of this body — his church. Now, it is certain, if ye seek to preserve your own name more than Christ's,

to give more content to your own lusts than to the will and heart of Christ; if more careful of fetching feathers to your own nests, and to shift for yourselves, and not to attend, every man in his place, the public good of the church, and Christ in it; it is certain God will forsake you, and all will to ruin quickly. 2 Chron. xv. 1, 2.

Church members of public spirits are ever prosperous men. "They shall prosper that love thee," (Ps. cxxii. 6;) that say in their hearts, out of sense of Christ's love, Lord, what shall I do for thee? How may I be useful to thy people? But if back and belly, mine and thine, be chief in request, this will ruin you.

3. League and amity with the enemies of Christ's kingdom, or peace with our lusts. It is not sin, but a privy peace with sin, and a secret quietness in sin, which overthrows Christ's kingdom. The Canaanites that were left alive, because, it is said, they could not drive them out — how often did they vex, and prick, and yoke the Israel of God! Those sins which, you say, you can not part with, and hence yield to them, and mourn not under them — those will ruin churches. Some sins you have forsaken and could forsake; the danger lies not here — wrath goeth out against Jehosaphat, because he loved him who hated the Lord. 2 Chron. xix. 2.

4. When the church lays by her weapons. No kingdom can be safe in an ordinary way, where all their weapons are taken from them, or not used by them when their enemies are upon their borders. When the church hang by, and lay aside faith, the shield whereby we defend ourselves, and prayer, whereby we offend our enemies, what safety is to be expected now in churches? "Only be strong," saith the Lord to Joshua, when he went out upon that great service of the Lord. Josh. i. 17. Eph. vi. 13. There is no more fearful sign of ruin to a church than where the spirit of prayer begins to fail; and, verily, if any people under heaven are ready to miscarry herein, we that have our fill of peace and our yokes broken off from our shoulders are in most danger; but if it be so, look for such shakings of all hearts, and churches also, as shall make you find your tongues, and knees, and ears, and hearts again, if the Lord means to dwell with you.

5. Not bringing forth the fruits of the kingdom. Matt. xxi. 43. Cut that church down that cumbers the ground after many years' pruning and wetting. That kingdom where there is church trading, but no considerable gain coming in, will consume quickly, and die of itself. Fruit is the last end of the tree.

All duties you do wherein you attain not, or, at least, aim not at your last and utmost end, that is not fruit; fruit refresheth others that taste it; when a Christian walketh so as another is not the better (not much refreshed) by him, but it may be hardened rather, by a sapless example, here is no fruit, and this calls for the ax to cut down the tree.

6. Divisions. This pulls down kingdoms without help of foreign enemies. If a kingdom thrusts swords into each other's bellies, this will soon despatch them. It is the Jesuits' plot to subdue by private divisions whom they cannot conquer by force of arms. It was most pleasing to Satan to prevail with Christ to cast himself down headlong from the pinnacle, rather than to fling him down himself. It is the delight of hell to set and see churches at variance among themselves; this is the first thing he attempts in the best churches, and it is commonly prosperous, if the Lord leaves the watchmen to slumber, and not to be watchful, and fearful, and suddenly sensible of the least beginnings herein. It is a wonderful thing to see what a small occasion of offence will do; a word, a gesture, a garment, a matter of indifferency. It is strange to see how much small matters will gore, if Satan's head be in them, and his horns be set upon them, especially in churches where men are set at liberty and enjoy it; one must have liberty to speak one thing, and another another thing; I am of this mind, saith one; I am not of that mind, brother, saith another. It is wonderful to see what a fire a secret smother and smoke of suspicion will do. But, O, take heed here. Gal. v. 15. Love the truth, receive no opinion differing from the most approved in the church suddenly; but weep, and pray, and ask counsel, and tremble to entertain a thought of contention. The first sin which brake out in the first Christian church was murmurings. Acts vi. 1. What follows? Stephen, an earthly angel, full of the Holy Ghost, suffers, and is taken from them, (Acts vii.;) and after this the whole church is scattered. Acts viii. O, keep the peace of the church, and rend it not for small matters. Love one another sincerely, and you can not but live together quietly.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE COMING OF CHRIST AND THE SECURITY OF PROFESSORS.

SECTION I.

THUS much of the place; now let us consider of the time when this preparation is made, set down in that word, *Then*, which word hath reference to chapter xxiv. 37, viz., to the days of the coming of the Son of man.

Quest. Now, when are these days?

Ans. We shall read both in prophetical and apostolical writings, that all the time from the ascension to the second coming of Christ is called the last days. Acts ii. 16, 17. Hence the primitive churches did, (long since,) and all the churches at this day ought to live in a daily expectation of his coming again, as these virgins here did. And hence some think that all this time may be the days of the coming of Christ, wherein all the churches either do, or should look out for the coming of Christ. Now, although I dare not exclude these days, in a large sense, from being the days of Christ's coming, as being the last days, and it being the duty of all to wait for this coming of Christ, as well as those who lived long before us, (1 Thes. i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 7,) yet, I believe, here is meant, more particularly, the latter part of those last days; for our Saviour having foretold of many things which shall fall out before his second coming, yet he seems to single out some particular time in these last days, to which he doth annex this (*then*,) and that is evident to all that view well the text, that they are the days of his coming; for though all the days of the gospel may be called the days of the Son of man, and some days especially wherein there is some kind of coming of the Son of man, as when he comes to hear prayers, (Luke xviii. 8,) yet, to speak properly, they are not the days of the coming of the Son of man. And look, as the days of Noah were not all the days from the creation to the deluge, but those particular years before the flood, so it is here — some special times before his coming are the days of his coming.

SECTION II.

Quest. But what is this coming of Christ?

Ans. There is a double coming of Christ.

1. His coming to call the Jews and to gather in the fullness of the Gentiles with them, which is called the "brightness of his

coming," (2 Thes. ii. 8;) when there shall be such a brightness of the truth shining forth in the world, armed with such instruments as shall utterly destroy Antichrist, long before his second coming. Rev. xix. 19, 20.

2. His coming to judgment, (Heb. ix. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 13, 24;) when there shall be a universal resurrection of good and bad. 1 Thes. iv. 15, 16, 17. Now, although it be true that, at the time of the coming of Christ to call the Jews, the churches, like chaste virgins, shall wait and make themselves ready for the marriage of the Lamb, (Rev. xi. 7,) yet the second coming of Christ seems to be the time which is here directly pointed at. Then shall those churches be virgin churches, waiting for Christ's coming, both to their particular judgment, but especially to the general judgment, when he shall appear as a glorious Bridegroom to the consolation and salvation of those who, in truth, have waited for him the second time. For this coming of Christ, spoken of in these two chapters, is that coming which is "in power and great glory," not in the churches spiritually, but "in the clouds of heaven." Chapter xxiv. 38. Wherein he shall separate the sheep from the goats; the one to lie among devils; the other to possess, not an earthly kingdom here for a thousand years, as some, from mistaking the meaning of the 20th chapter of the Revelation, imagine; but to inherit "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world," (Matt. xxv. 34;) which can not be any better, nor any other, than the third heaven, where the face of God is seen, and where he hath had an innumerable host of glorious angels, his subjects, to serve him, not only since the first time of man's creation, but the first foundation of the world. Gen. i. 1. Which also Christ himself "is gone to prepare for us." John xiv. 2, 3. And which Abraham's faith only expected, even a city which was not earthly, but heavenly, "which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." Heb. xi. 10, 11. So that although this parable looks most directly into those times which are yet to come, yet as all examples registered in holy Scripture for time past are applicable and useful to us, so these that are yet to come are alike instructive to us, especially in these times and places wherein the Lord, according to his manner of working great things usually, gives among us some small, yet lively resemblance of those days.

SECTION III.

Doct. That in those days of Christ's coming, wherein the churches of Christ and professors of the gospel shall grow virgin

churches, — all visible saints, — when all members seem to be espoused to Christ, yet there will be found desperate folly in some, and in time great security will fall upon all.

Some there are who think the days we live in now are not only the days of the Son of man, but part of the days of the coming of the Son of man, wherein the churches, especially in these places, grow to be virgin professors. Our judgments hold it, our practice maintains it, all church members are and must be visible saints, visible believers, virgins espoused to Christ, escaping the pollutions of idolatry and the world. Take heed the Lord find not many of you foolish; take heed that you are not so, that in time you grow not secure. You have the pillow of peace to lie on, and the cares of the world to make you dream away your time, and you have no pinching persecutions to awaken you; and if no wrestlings within, look for security there. Folly will be the death and bane of some; hence boast not. Security (a sleeping sickness) will be the disease of others, if the Lord prevent not. But I intend not to anchor here, only to set up marks at these flats, that you may avoid them, and come not near them.

CHAPTER IV.

SHOWETH THAT THE SOUL THAT WILL ENJOY COMMUNION WITH CHRIST MUST BE DIVORCED FROM ALL OTHER LORDS, PARTICULARLY FROM LUSTS AND FROM THE LAW. THE MANNER OF ITS ESPOUSALS UNTO CHRIST.

Section I.

Now, therefore, to come to the third thing — the persons that make this preparation are set forth, 1. In what they all agree in; and that is, first, in that they are all virgins. What are these? *Ans.* To omit the Popish interpretation of their nuns and mock virgins, —

I shall rather make use of Scripture to give light to interpret this place. For opening of it, know, the whole church may be called the spouse of Christ; and take every member alone, a virgin attending on this spouse, (Ps. xlv.;) nay, the apostle (2 Cor. xi. 2) calls the whole church a virgin; so that by virgins are meant whole particular churches of Christ, together with the several members thereof. Now, virgins are such as are fit for marriage, and not defiled with any man, as it is said of Rebecca;

so by virgins is meant those that are not polluted within or without with the evils of the world, (Rev. xiv. 4;) but more is to be understood here, (2 Cor. xi. 2;) when once marriage is come, they cease to be virgins, and are wives; yet when espoused to Christ, now they are spiritually virgins; hence these here are only like to virgins. So that the meaning of virgins is this: by virgins is meant such churches, or members of churches, as are divorced from all other lovers, and matched only to Jesus Christ. These only look for the coming of Christ, and communion with him; these only are received into communion.

Section II.

Obs. 1. Whoever look for everlasting communion with the Bridegroom of the church, Jesus Christ, must be virgins, divorced from all others, and espoused only to Jesus Christ.

Here were, indeed, foolish ones among these; yet, as foolish and blind as they were, they saw that this was the way, to be like the wise, to be virgins as well as they, (Ps. xlv. 10, 11; Jer. iii. 19, 20;) as a wife departs, so ye — "but how shall I put thee among the children," etc.; "you shall call me, My Father;" i. e., one instead of all other things; "and shall not turn aside from me," (Hos. ii. 23;) there is their communion; hence the Lord will, 1. Take away the names of Balaam; 2. Betroth them to himself.

Section III.

Quest. What is it to be divorced from all other lovers?

Ans. Idolatry is called whoredom in Scripture, and this is one thing the soul must be divorced from before it can be matched to the Lord. Hos. ii. 2. I shall not need to press this here; but there are two other things which I shall show, for there are two things that every man doth before he is espoused to the Lord Jesus; either, first, he departs and goes a whoring, by unlawfully lusting after the creature, (Ps. lxxiii. 27; Jas. iv. 4;) or, second, he is lawfully married, as he thinks, unto the law. Rom. vii. 3, 4. The law is there compared to a husband, from which Christ, indeed, delivers his, yet some will stick to it; either the soul takes content in some creature more than in Christ, or in some righteousness more than in the Lord Jesus. Now, to be divorced from all other things is for the heart to be taken off from all worldly contentments. Secondly, from comforting itself in the bosom of its own work and righteousness, and this must be found in all them that look for communion with the Lord Jesus.

Section IV.

The heart must be divorced from lusts after, and pleasures in, any creature. For proof, we must know this:—

1. The soul of every man must have something to quiet and comfort it, like the stomach. It is death and hell to want it, (as the Israelites in the wilderness;) hence it must have it.

2. There is nothing that can comfort the thirsty heart; but it is either in the spring or cistern, fountain or bottles; either in God or in the creature.

3. Hence man, having lost God and all good there, seeks for it in the creature; and because he finds not enough in one, digs for it in another. Ps. iv., "Who will show us any good?" And hence the soul, because it never found that infinite sweetness in God himself, lusts after and delights in the creature for itself, loves pleasure for pleasure, delights in the creature for the creature, not for God. Why should he, seeing he never found content there? And here the soul of man cleaves night and day, committing spiritual whoredom before the face of God. Now, if ever any soul has communion with Christ, it must be divorced from all creatures thus; for lust is a desire after, and content in, the creature for the creature's sake.

Reason 1. Because, while the heart is in league with any creature besides the Lord, it is at deadly enmity with the Lord. James iv. 4. If a man hath a rich commodity, and one comes and offers half the worth of it, he takes it as a contempt; if it be not worth this, it is worth nothing. So the Lord is worthy of all our love, our lives, our souls, (though we had a thousand of them;) and will a man not part with his lusts for him? I tell you, the Lord takes himself slighted, contemned, and loathed; if not worth all a man's love, he is worth nothing. Now, the creature is made a god, because made a man's last end, which is as proper to God as to make him the Alpha of all. Here the greatest wrath is to give a man his fill of the creature.

Reason 2. Because so long the soul can not see nor come by the eye and feet of faith to the Lord Jesus, (John v. 44,) and think Christ better than all; as birds in a string may fly high, but when they come to the end of the line they fall down there; and so, though the soul flies to Christ, yet when, indeed, it comes to the end of parting with all, it falls down and falls off from Christ. Whole men have no heart nor desire after physicians; when all limbs are whole and strong, no desire after plasters; so, while any thing eases and contents the heart, there is no desire after Christ. Hos. iv. 11, "Whoredom and wine have taken away the heart."

Reason 3. Because so long the heart, if it do come, can not stay with Christ to do any thing for Christ. Matt. vi. 24, "You can not serve God and riches," i. e., two masters, who have constant employment; and Christ hath set us such employment. Hence men on sick beds are tame as may be, promise any thing, because their joy in the creature is gone. Hence, on the other side, many men, after many springings of heart, are choked by thorns of the world.

Reason 4. From the abundant love that the Lord Jesus shows to them that ever have, or look for, communion with him. Those to whom we show much love, from those we expect much again. As a man if taken or cast out to be servant, one looks not for love from him; but when a man hath given himself and made over all his estate to another, now all love is too little. So it is with the Lord Jesus. John vi., "Will you also depart?"

Section V.

2. The soul must be divorced from the law, i. e., from comforting itself with the righteousness thereof. For explication of which we must consider these things:—

1. That the Lord doth not ever give a man content in his sins and lusts, but wounds conscience for the same.

2. That so long as the Lord wounds a man's conscience for sin, no creature can give a man comfort or content. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Judas casts away his silver pieces, and Belshazzar quakes, who was but even now quaffing in his cups. As a man that hath an aching tooth, or broken bones, what can comfort him now?

3. Hereupon the law falls upon a man, or a man meets with the law; for as all a man's sorrow is upon him, because the law is broken, all a man's care is how he may keep it again. What shall I do? As a man cast in prison for debt, there all is opened; and the law, like an earnest suitor, 1. Presseth hard for love and obedience; 2. Promiseth a rich portion—eternal life, if he can keep it; if not, you must be damned; therefore now forsake your sins, etc.

4. Hence the soul, not knowing a better husband, consents and resolves to cleave to it. Rom. x. 3. Deut. v., "Whatever the Lord will have us do, we will do it;" and here it stays and is comforted, here it rests; as in Asa's time, all rejoiced for the oath. (2 Chron. xv.; Isa. lviii. 1, 2;) and if it find not perfect comfort because of imperfect work, it then closeth with Christ for to make up and piece up all. Gal. v. 1. And now, I say, it

is comforted in what it hath and doth, and here it rests; now, from hence it must be divorced. What need I prove it, when the apostle hath so fully, *Galat. per totum?* and consider the young man. Matt. xix. Divorced, I say, the soul must be from this.

1. Because he that doth thus, sets up another Christ, and makes himself his own saviour. Can the Lord Jesus take such a soul into communion with him? Suppose a prince be pulled by his people from his throne, and they set up another pious prince to rule, will this serve the turn, to say he is an honest prince? so, though duties be never so good, yet not to advance Christ is to pull down Christ.

2. Because such persons do commonly most oppose the Lord Jesus in a way of believing, though not in a way of doing; the Lord hath more ado, if any of these be brought home, to bring them in; they have somewhat to say for themselves, they have stronger forts, etc. The Scribes and Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and hence no people left to such deep desertions as these, if the Lord intend mercy to them, for they have more need than others.

3. Because hereby a man doth but make a conspiracy against God's greatest plot that ever he had afoot, viz.: to advance his free grace (Gal. v. 4) you are fallen from grace, for nothing makes a man more fit to boast than works, and resting in them. Sin makes a man ashamed, and therefore, if they come to heaven, they have laid a foundation to thank themselves for somewhat; hence no communion with Jesus Christ in this frame; no, the Lord will tear down this foundation, and make the soul cry guilty; and make this husband, the law, to be judge, to examine and condemn; and now come to ask, What have you to plead for your life and peace? It hath no plea to show but mercy, etc.; it hath its duties evidencing against it.

Section VI.

2. The soul now comes to be espoused to the Lord Jesus.

Quest. How?

Ans. 1. The soul, beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus, makes choice of him, as in all marriage bonds there is a choice made; and, if love be great, there is little standing on terms — let me have him though I beg with him; so the soul sees such a suitableness in the Lord Jesus, as that it stands not on terms — let me have him, though in prison with him, though in the garden in agonies with him, though in the cross in desertions with him;

he is enough, as Peter, when he saw Christ on the sea, desired he might come to him there; (Heb. xi. 26,) "choosing the reproach of Christ," etc.; and look, as Christ chooseth the soul, 1. The whole soul; 2. Everlastingly; 3. Above all others; so it makes choice of Christ, whole Christ. Phil. iii. 9. 2. Everlastingly, "The Lord is my portion forever." Ps. lxxiii. 26. And before ever you can look for communion with him, you must make this choice of him, and glad too you may have him on any terms; nay, put it to any soul the Lord hath done good to, and ask it, Will you have him? It is such a mercy, I can not conceive how one so vile as I should have it; have him, the Lord of glory, the Prince of life and peace; O, yes! Hence Peter said, "Master, what shall we have that have forsaken all and followed thee?" You shall sit with me on thrones; and look, as Christ now chooseth the soul above others, as well as in heaven, (John xv. 16,) so it now chooseth Christ, "Whom have I in heaven or earth?" Many, when they think of death, or are dying, then choose him, but not now, or choose him for outward blessings, not spiritual favor and life. John vi. 26, 27.

2. The soul hence gives itself, like one espoused to her husband, to the Lord Jesus. Cant. ii. 16, "I am my beloved's." Servants give work for their wages, and masters give wages for their work, but husbands and wives give themselves one unto another; suitors also give tokens to draw on love, not themselves; so servants in the church they do for God in hope of wages, and the Lord blesseth them, it may be outwardly; but he that is espoused to Christ gives himself. Lord, I can do nothing for thee; give nothing to thee, but I give myself to thee, that thou wouldst work in me and by me. Rom. vi. 13. So the Lord is a suitor to many a man that never gives himself to him; he gives them some comforts, some winning, drawing, melting mercies, but not himself; they give him some entertainment and good words, a thousand wishes, as Capernaum did, but not themselves; but this must be, if ever you look for communion with him. Hence David saith, "I am thine, save me;" hence some made shipwreck of faith, they were not the Lord's; hence the Lord saith, he knows who are his, (2 Tim. ii. 18, 19;) his send their tokens again. For look, as it is an evidence of much love when a man gives the dearest thing he hath, viz., his whole self, to the Lord Jesus, so it is also an evidence of little love when he will not give, especially another's own. Thou art none of thine own; thou hast but little love if thou give not thyself to him, without which never look for life and communion with the Lord.

3. The soul hence takes full contentment in the Lord Jesus,

as a spouse hath enough, would not change for all the world, as Peter when he had a glimpse of Christ's glory, "Lord, let us be here;" or, as Simeon that had been waiting for the consolation of Israel, when once he had Christ in his arms, "Now let thy servant depart in peace." I have enough; now let me die, and not live to sin more; and it is certain as there is somewhat in creatures that contents the heart without Christ in an unregenerate man, so contrariwise in a regenerate. John iii. 29, if hearing the bridegroom is joy, what is having him? Indeed, they take content in other things but as coming from the husband; and this you must do if ever you look for communion with him. Can not you be content with the Lord alone in heaven? you shall never come there, then, lest you quarrel for want of something. Men make nothing of this, to bathe their hearts in the sun, and joy in what they have and hope to have, but the Lord may be gone, and you grieve not. Why? Because other things ease your hearts. There can be no communion hereafter if you despise it now.

Section VII.

Use 1. This serves to discover the great error, most common and dangerous of the whole Christian world, who think that they may love and embrace the world and the Lord Jesus too; i. e., they may not be virgins, but go a whoring from Christ, and yet partake of Christ and mercy from him; that look as it was in those sad days, (Isa. iv. 1,) so in these days many lay hold on Jesus Christ; they will eat their own bread, live on their own lusts, and wear their own apparel, their own rags, only let us be called by thy name, believers, to take away our reproach, for that is an open shame not to believe in Christ. For this is the professed thought of some; every one is a sinner, and I am one, and a great one too, and who can say his heart is clean, none can free himself from sin in this life, and I can not do it if I would; and hence look on Christ to save them, though sin sleeps in them. You can not have both. I would but inquire, Hath not every man something that contents him? What is it? Is it the love, the fellowship of Jesus? Yes, it may be at a sacrament, and it may be not; for thou mayst say, The Lord never yet revealed his love and self unto me, never yet assured me, yet somewhat joys thy heart. What think you? can you have the Lord and content yourselves thus with other things? Why? I ~~trust to him I hope~~ so. It can not be so. If the Lord Jesus was a patron of brothel houses, a protector of stews, you might think so. Some say they can not pray to him, nor prize him. Why? Some-

thing else contents them besides him; but know it can not be so. I know a saint may be taken aside, as David, with envy at others' prosperity; but when he considers of it, O, what a beast he returns again! The raven and the dove were sent forth; the one came again and again, the other not; therefore, as Josh. xxiv. brought the people to these thoughts, "you can not serve the Lord and other gods," as Junius notes, so bring thyself to that strait. O that the Lord would set on this one thing this day! When I sadly weigh it, it confounds me and makes me say, Lord, who then can be saved? I know with God all things are possible; but this is rare.

Section VIII.

Use 2. Hence we may learn who they are that never shall have everlasting communion with the Lord, viz., those that never were espoused to him; and you may know this, if never yet divorced from all others besides him. Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26. I shall stay a while here, because there is never an unsound heart in the world; but as they say of witches, they have some familiar that sucks them, so they have some lust that is beloved of them, some beloved there is they have given a promise to, never to forsake; and, also, because most men do seem and think they are virgins espoused to Christ, and look for communion with him, and yet not divorced from all other besides him. I shall show hence, —

1. When the soul is in league with the creature.
2. When married to the law. I should account it happy if any be found out.

CHAPTER V.

SHOWETH THE MARKS AND SIGNS WHEREBY THE SOUL MAY KNOW WHETHER HE BE IN LEAGUE OR LOVE WITH ANY LUST OR CREATURE, OR MARRIED TO THE LAW.

Section I.

Those that never were in bitterness and sorrow of heart for the loss of God. For these two things are as clear as the sun: —

1. That the loss of God is the greatest loss; for it is the utmost and last plague upon the damned in hell. My comforts, my friends, means, heaven is gone; but if God were mine, I would be comforted. No, God is gone; hence no sorrow for any loss so much as for this. Saul, (1 Sam. xxviii. 15,) "God is

departed from me." Hence sore distressed. Nay, the Lord Jesus, when the Father departed for a time, and he knew he would return and visit him, cried out, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

2. That all men living have lost God. Isa. lix. 1, 2; Ps. lviii. 3, "The wicked go astray from their womb." Now, I would demand why men either feel no loss at all, or if they do, have not so much grace as the damned in hell, to mourn bitterly for it, so as nothing can comfort them, or if they do, they are soon eased and quieted before the Lord returns. Why, surely here is the great cause of it — they have some other thing to ease their hearts in the want and loss of God. Jer. ii. 13, 14. Men must have water to drink; why do men live from the fountain, nor go to it, nay, not know it? Because they have broken pits and wells at their own doors; so here. And hence the damned that have lived at ease here all their lifetime, as soon as ever dead, then they cry out of the loss of God, when it is too late, because while they lived they had somewhat to ease themselves withal. And hence, many that have lived long with convinced spirits and guilty consciences, when they come to die, then they are in perplexities of mind, agonies of heart, insomuch as their sweat trickles like water from them, and their doleful outcries for loss of time strike to the hearts of all that come near them. O, God is gone; because now all comforts which were their gods, and instead of God, before, have taken their final leave of them. Search your hearts, therefore, all you that hear me this day. Wast thou never troubled yet? Yes, I have lost my health, my child, my husband, my goods, and this hath troubled me. But tell me, didst thou never feel a loss of God blessed forever — loss of his light, his sweetness, his love, his fellowship, his presence, &c., and this hath been thy intolerable load? Or, if thou hast felt it, hast thou sought and found him? No, but art jocund in that estate, and now and then it troubles thee a little, then it is certain and as clear as the sun, there is some creature or content that thy heart is in league withal, which easeth thee in want of God, and which is instead of God to thee, and which, therefore, is thy God; it may be thy apparel, thy wife, child, etc.; and, if thou die in this estate, never shalt thou have communion with Jesus Christ; "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Sign 2. Dost thou find the Lord a stranger to thee in all his ordinances, wherein it may be the Lord sweetly, and wonderfully, and mightily, yet not always, but seasonably reveals himself to others? O, but thy heart dries and parches away, and that

without much trouble under them all. If so, suspect it, believe it, that there is some league with a lust. For there is a double life of a Christian. 1. An outward life which others see. Men see he comes to church, prays in the family, etc. 2. There is a secret inward life; according to that of Matt. vi. 6, "Thy Father which sees in secret," which none knows but himself and the Lord; and this an ineffable communion with God, vision of God, delight in God, etc. Ps. xlv., "The King's daughter is all glorious within." There is an open life of prayer, and hearing, and fasting, and there is an inward secret life in all these, wherein the Lord acquaints himself with his people. Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 3, "To see thee as I have seen thee." Now, there be divers have this open life, yet wanting the secret life. As we love not to live among tombs, nor to have any communion with dead men, so the Lord is a stranger to them. He may secretly sweeten an ordinance to them, and move them, and shake and trouble them; but himself is a stranger, spiritual miseries not removed, spiritual mercies not conveyed. Is. lviii. 1, 2, 3, 4, "Why have we fasted, and thou regardest not? You took pleasure, saith the Lord, and break the bonds of wickedness," etc. I know saints may be thus denied, and it may be for some space of time; yet they quarrel not with God for denying them, but are more taken off from pleasures thereby. "Thou hidest thy face, and I was troubled," though the mount stood still. But some there be whom neither good day mends them nor bad day pares them. Surely there is some content thy heart is bewitched withal. That look as it is with a suitor to another; let him, while he comes to her, profess never so much love, and desire love, yet if, when he goes from her, commits lewdness with every one, she will lock him out. So it is here. Never did I know any locked out from the power and sweetness of ordinances, but because they went a whoring from God out of them. The Lord knows, though others do not, whether it is so with you. Look, therefore, upon thyself. You enjoy great means every where in this place. Is it enough to have ordinances, the ark? No. Do you find the Lord in them? Blessed be God! But tell me truly, do you find no want of God? Yes. Do you find him? I find more knowledge, strength, etc. But do you find no God usually? No. Then either some creature contents thee, or if the Lord should refresh thee, thou wouldst be content without him. Man and wife will, if they love, meet at meals. John xiv. But when no meeting, dead prayers, dry sermons, sapless sacraments, worse than before. If thou art the Lord's, he will, by afflictions, purge, etc. But if thou continuest so, look for no communion in heaven.

Sign 3. Dost thou find no rest in any thing that thou hast? For this is clear, nothing can give rest to a man's soul but God. He is big enough only to fill it, and then a man hath it. Is. xxvi. 3. Now, if no rest, it is a sign thy heart sticks to the creature; yet thou sayest, I would fain have the Lord. It may be so, but thou wouldst have creatures too. And hence God will not, and creatures can not, give the fullness of rest. Thus it was with Solomon. Eccles. ii. 3. So it is with thee; thou findest thy soul delighting itself in all things; yet vanity and vexation, and withal giving thyself to wisdom, too. It is true, a saint feels an emptiness in these things, yet he feels a fullness in something else. He hath better meat, which you know not of, which Solomon did not for a time, yet afterward he did. But thou findest a vanity and trouble, and art never at peace when all is done, weary of the world. But hath the Lord swallowed thee up into himself, in the cloud of his glory, so that in his favor and presence thou findest life? No: then there is some lust thou lovest, and dying thus, shalt never see the face of Christ. Yea, this will come as a heavy indictment against thee, that God hath so wearied thee in thy way. Yet, (Jer. ii. 25,) "There is no hope; after thy lovers thou wilt go." You shall scarce find any but feel the creature vain, and yet get not to rest in God.

Section II.

Discoveries whether we are married to the law or not. And here I shall stay longer. Where I premise,—

1. When I speak of not being married to the law instead of Christ, I do not hereby exempt yourselves from obedience to the law after you are in Christ.

2. Do not think I speak against all, evidencing your estates from conformity to the law, though I do from some subjection and obedience performed to the law.

1. If the law was never dead in thee, thou art married to the law. Rom. vii. 2. Now, look as it is with a husband, if the wife be sick, and he be at home, whoever forsakes her, he will comfort her, and support and cheer her; so that, if he cheer her not, it is a sign he is dead; if he doth, it is a sign he is alive; for the life of the law is the comfort and support that the law doth give for a time. So that thou wert never brought to that sore strait, that thou hast not felt any one duty to cheer or revive thee and comfort thee; but hast found some little thing or other to do it; it is certain you are yet married to the law. *Ex. gr.* It may be thou hast been troubled in mind for thy sins; what hath cheered

thee? I have forsaken them, and cast out Jonah, and there has been a calm. Why, this forsaking thy sins (which hath not been all, but some) is not Christ, but an act of the law. O, but I have fallen again into sins; this hath troubled thee. What hath cheered thee? I have repented and been sorry for them, and purposed to do so no more. This is the life of the law still. O, but you find sins prevailing against you, and you can not part with them; and hence dare not resolve against them. O, but my desire is good, though my will hath ever been against them. O ignorance! This desire is but a work of the law; it is not Christ. O, but I have found no desire sometime. What hath quieted you now? I have trusted in Christ. You have done it. The Lord never made you feel a need of the Lord to draw you to trust, though to be assured of Christ's love. Is this a legal act?

Ans. As obedience to the law done by the power of Christ is an evangelical work, so to perform any evangelical work from a man's self is a legal work; and you are under the life of the law. So that thou hast not been brought to that pass as the church, the spouse, was. Is. liv. 5, 6. And as one of my best friends, and best men that lives this day in the world, after many wrestlings to find somewhat in himself to cheer him, and could not; now, saith he, "If the Lord, out of his good nature, etc., do not help me, I am undone forever; for I have a heart and nature against him, and the more I do, the worse I am." And, therefore, thither I look. Surely you are under the life of the law, and are far enough off from Christ, if not sensible of this. Not that a man is always thus; for he that can not feel afterward the Lord Jesus, by the power of his grace working in his heart, I would conclude he never had any at all. But at first it is so. For these two things man naturally seeks,—

1. To have a righteousness in himself that will ease him.

2. To have it from himself. Kitchen physic is not far to fetch.

Now, the Lord's plot in saving his, is, 1. To make them seek it out of themselves in another: "Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth." 2. To have all from another, that so "no flesh might glory before him." And to doubt of this is to doubt whether God hath plotted the glory of his grace or no. Hence the Lord empties the soul of both, that the soul saith, "Ashur shall not save us." Hos. xiv. 3, 4. None durst, none can comfort it. And now, to the wonderment of heaven and everlasting joy of a poor castaway, and the eternal honor of his free grace; now, and never till now, doth he begin to make the

match between the Lord Jesus and his poor soul. And as the Lord never comes to him till now, so he never will come to the Lord while he hath the least good; as it was with the prodigal while any husks, or as it was with the woman with her bloody issue, while any money to spend on other physicians, never will try what Christ can do. And, therefore, those that never yet knew of the death of the law, they are yet married to it. Rom. ii. 17. I know many a soul grieves for the death of this husband, and now thinks it is undone; I can not do this and that, though formerly I could, indeed; I say, if there be any love of Christ, now is the time of it. Only understand God's scope here in it.

Sign 2. If a man complains more, or chiefly, for want of grace or righteousness to remove sin, and not so much for want of Jesus Christ, then in this case it is as it is with a woman, that man for whose absence she mourns most, that is her husband. She saith the other is; no, but he is not. So this is the estate of many a soul; they have neither Christ nor righteousness. Now, they complain so much that their hearts sink and die away quite within them. And what is it for? I can not do this, nor I do not find nor feel such signs and affections within me. Such a vile heart, I know not the like, such rising in my heart to sin and thoughts of it; why, if you had Christ, all this would be mended. "I can do all through Christ." But you complain not for want of Christ, nor need of him, from these two arguments:—

1. Because the feeling of your sins does not make you feel a greater need of Christ, as John, "I have need to be baptized," etc.; but drive you farther from Christ, and reason it out against him. And why? Because you would have a righteousness without him which you stand in need of.

2. Because he that feels a need of the Lord Jesus shall not, when he is offered, need entreating to take him; as you shall not need entreat hungry men to eat their bread, you shall not need to entreat Zaccheus to receive Christ joyfully. But no commands, no entreaties, can prevail with you to take him when he is offered; you have no heart to it. Like women that love their own husbands, grieve so for their absence, that they have no heart to any other offer. Is it thus with thee? Then it is with thee as it was with that young man that asks Christ what he should do to inherit eternal life. He liked Christ well, but he did not feel a need of Christ himself so much as of some more knowledge of the law and ability to do it. It is the great plot of Arminians to make Christ a means only, to make every man a first Adam; setting men to work for their living again;

for they grant all grace is lost, all comes from Christ, Christ gives all, and to Christ we must look for all; and then when we have it use it well; thus you shall have life, else look for death. So it is a misery many a soul is in. Men will trade in small wares, rather than live on another's alms. Do you think the Lord takes it well to make him a merchant for your ends? O, no! Never look to have communion with him in this way.

Sign 3. Those that close with, but rejoice more in a little grace they receive from Christ than in all the fullness in Christ, more in a little they do than in all the Lord Jesus hath done. Philip. iii. 3. That is a woman's husband whom she rejoiceth most. Do you rejoice more in what you have received from him (for a hypocrite may receive from Christ, John xv. 2) than in what there is in him? It argues a whorish heart. I know a man may rejoice in what Christ works in him; but, 1. Not more in this than in Christ himself. 2. A child of God may, while he knows not whether Christ is his, do so; but you think the Lord is yours. Well, when you feel affections and life, then you are glad; when that is lost, then sad. Why, is there no life when thou art dead, no glory when thou art base, no wisdom, no communion with God, when thou hast none? Yes; why dost thou not rejoice in this which is here most fully, which saints presenting please the Lord more by than by giving the glory of angels infinite millions of years? O, thy heart is not in love with Christ, but somewhat else; for here is the joy of all saints, "In thy seed shall all nations account themselves blessed;" all nations, one and another. Is. xlv. 24, 25, "Shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Consider, therefore, this, thou art sometime joyed. Why? O, I find my heart thus and thus. And is this all? Yes; for when this is gone all joy dies. And should I not do thus? Yes, else thou never felt comfort of it; but not only rejoice here, but when the beam is gone, the Lord is not gone, Rom. vii. *ult.*; when the bottles are spent, the spring is full.

4. He that performs any duty ultimately to ease his conscience, he is married yet unto the law; for there are two sorts of duties to the law.

1. Some are directed to give Christ content to ease his heart, by seeing God's love in Christ; then, love being shed, the heart sheds it on Christ again; and thus saith the apostle, "I through the law am dead to it, that I might live to God." Gal. ii. 19.

2. Some are to give the soul ease; it sees sin, and fears it must die, and the devil appears, and when it lies down it fears it shall never awaken again; and when it hears, thinks no mercy,

but only threats belong to it; and hence, having no peace of conscience to think God will love it, it loves duties, doth duties, and now takes these for good tokens and signs of love; and if it feels a need of Christ, it is only to ease it. Now, a man is married to the law, when he crowds for ease into the bosom of it. Deut. v. 37. They were in great fear — "Whatever God will have us do, we will do it." Is it not thus with many? How shall we know this?

Ans. Dost thou find this while fears and terrors of conscience are on thee, so long thou dost seek, and pray, and hear, and call on God, and when they are worn away with time, or blown over with feeling some good things and hopes from them, then thy heart is careless again, it is certain you are yet married to the law; as many a man exceeding forward while pressed under sense of sin for a year or two. Lord, how many hundreds drop away by little and little afterward! Deut. v. 29, "O that there were such a heart alway!" Matt. iii. 3, 7 to 13, they saw a wrath to come, hence feared, and hence came to John's baptism to repent and confess him.

5. No man that is married to the law, but his fig leaves ever cover some nakedness; all the duties ever brood some lust. There is some one sin or other the man lives in, which either the Lord discovers, and he will not part with, as the young man, or else is so spiritual he can not see all his lifetime. Read through the strictest of all, and see this; Matt. xxiii., painted sepulchers. Paul, that was blameless, yet (Eph. ii. 3; Tit. iii. 3) served divers "lusts and pleasures;" and the reason is, the law is not the ministration of the Spirit, (2 Cor. iii. 8, 9,) which breaks off from every sin; there is no law that can give life. Gal. iii. 21. And hence many men have strong resolutions, and break all again; hence men sin and sorrow, and pray again, and then go with more ease in their sin. Examine thyself. Is there any living lust with thy righteousness? It is sure it is a righteousness that thou art married to, and never wert yet matched to Christ. Hence note thyself; it may be thou hast rested in duties, and since more light came, saw it; and seeing this, thinking that here is all thy error, thou hast labored to see the emptiness of thy own righteousness and the fullness of Christ, and now thou art come to both, and now well. So, then, thou hast not found out any lust thou livest in all that time, nor the venom of thy old nature. No. Why, then, I pronounce thou art yet married to the law; take and trust never so much to Christ's righteousness, if under the power of a proud heart, an unclean heart still, never speak of Christ.

Sign 6. They that are fearful to be troubled at their estate to have it prove ill, which a saint may do, yet brings it out to the light at last. John iii. 20. When a woman is married to a condemned man, guilt being upon him, he loves not to be seen abroad in the sight of others. Thou hearest a sermon, and art loth it should be found out, loth to be troubled. He that hath righteousness in Christ will not only bring it to trial before men, but God himself. Now, is it thus with any of you? What shall I say? Shall I say that Christ is or may be thine in this estate? Truly, if I durst, I should. Bless thyself thou mayst; but remember that the Lord will take thee to do for it; and what is it to lose communion with Christ? I can not express it. The disciples were sad when he went away from them in his abasement; but for the Lord to leave thee when in his glory, to stand afar off and see him go, never to see him more, when no tears shall ever prevail again. Therefore, if thou hast been found out this day, confess and give glory to God, and let thine eyes be tears, that Christ would overcome and draw thy soul with love, and espouse thee to himself forever.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS TO PERSUADE US UNTO THE LOVE OF CHRIST, AND TO BE ESPOUSED TO HIM.

Use 3. Is there no communion to be had with the Lord Jesus, unless virgins — unless espoused to him? O, therefore, here is a match for you; choose him, get your affections, if entangled, to come off if insnared to any other thing, and set your hearts, bestow your love upon him. For it is not a dead faith (but such a faith as is animated by love) that does espouse you to him. Gal. v. 6, "Faith which works by love." And, therefore, as the love of other things (not worth looking after) has got the sovereignty and royalty of thy heart, so this is a conjugal love, when it bears rule in the heart. Let Christ have this love. And as you have loved creatures for themselves, now love the Lord Jesus for himself. And as they have easily enticed you to set your hearts upon them, now be persuaded to set your dearest affections on him. It is said of John Baptist, he was the bridegroom's friend, to speak for him. John iii. 29. And truly it is the main work of the ministry to woo for Christ, and so to present chaste virgins to Christ. This shall be my work now,

which may be seasonable in this decaying time. Therefore I shall chiefly bend my speech to three sorts.

1. To them that never yet loved the Lord Jesus, unless it be from the teeth outward.

2. Those that have been striving for this; yet can not, to their own feeling, come to this.

3. Those that have so; but their affections are dried up, and love is parched away, "iniquity abounds," etc. And my motives shall be these four:—

1. Consider the glory of the person whom I shall be a spokesman for this day.

2. Consider he makes love to thee.

3. Consider that all he seeks for is love.

4. Consider what he will do for thee, how he will love thee, if thou wilt love him.

Section I.

Consider the glory of the person for whom I plead for love. What can you love besides him? Where can you find any like unto him? I know the glory of the Lord is not revealed, because the grass withers not, the flower fades not, the creature appears not in his withering vanity. Is. xl. But if the Lord would but open your eyes to see him, this would win your hearts alone to him.

Now, I shall single out only these five things, to give you a glimpse of his glory. Lift up thy heart, and say, "Lord, hide not now thy face from me."

1. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth. Rev. i. 5. The glory of the world is a kingdom, the glorious diamond of that kingdom is a prince in his glory. Now, for a poor beggar to have an offer of love from the greatest prince in the world, would it not tempt her? Would she not forsake her lovers, and set her heart on him? Why, look what a distance there is between the poorest peasant and the highest prince; so base, and a thousand times, are all the princes of the world to Christ, whose dominion is from sea to sea, from sun to sun, who sets up and pulls down kings like counters, who rules their courts, their kingdoms, their hearts, and they do not do, they can not do, but what he will. Other kings are princes, are rulers of men; Christ Prince of kings. Now, who would not be glad of his love? who, having tasted death, is set down on the right hand of God on high, clothed with endless glory, who has kings in his chains, whose breath is not in his nostrils, whose favor is not for a day, but he lives and reigns forever. Now, does Christ reign?

Is he a Lord, and in glory upon his throne? Methinks I see Jesus at the right hand of God. Your foolish affections have undone you, if you love him not.

2. He is appointed by the Father to be Judge of quick and dead at the last day, (John v. 22, 23,) as well as to rule all now. So that if you do maintain enmity against him, he may let you alone, you may live in health and die in peace, in the eye of man, and in thine own eyes, too; yet there is a day coming he will break out of heaven, with a shout, and appear in the clouds, in the amazing glory of his Father, "with all his mighty angels, and all the dead shall hear his voice," and you shall appear before him with this body, when the heavens shall burn round about him, and the earth shall tremble under him, and all guilty eyes mourning and wailing because of him. Then you shall know what it is to despise him, and wish, O that I had loved him. Rev. i. 7. You that say you love him, yet by an impenitent heart pierce him, you shall wail, even so, Amen. Men do not see an end of these things, nor the glory of the Lord another day. Hence creatures are loved, and the Lord of glory is lothed. A great prince may not be so highly esteemed until he appears in his state. Prisoners would give any money (much more love) for the judge's favor.

3. He only is the procurer and author of all the good that ever thou didst suck out here, though thou hast neither known him, nor been thankful to him. For look, as it was with angels, so it should have been with man; the wrath of God should have been poured out upon him, and on all the world, and creatures should have been tormentors of him, but that the Lord Jesus begged and bought the world. And hence (1 Tim. iv. 10) called "Saviour of all, but chiefly of the elect." Micah iv. 4, "In his days, men shall sit under vines and fig trees." So that if ever any creature ever did thee good, it was Jesus that put that sweetness in it, out of his fullness, and set it a work, sent it to thee, gave it thee to do thee good. Thou shouldst never have had wink of sleep, never restrained from one sin, but lived in blaspheming God, never have heard of a gospel but for Christ. And will you not love him? O ungrateful world! unnatural generation of men! Why dost thou love any creature? It is for the paint of it and good in it. If there be so much in it, what is there in Christ that gave it, that dropped it into it? Never love him if there be any thing good that is not by him. Ps. cxvi. 1, "The Lord hath heard my prayer; I will call on him as long as I live." Much more when the Lord hath delivered, and thou didst never seek to him.

4. He is the everlasting wonderment of saints in heaven. The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon, which made her come to see him; but she before imagined but that which now she saw with her own eyes, and that rapt her out of herself. Here we hear of the Lord Jesus, of his beauty and glory, and this draws saints to him; and, when come, they see that which they never saw before, especially when in heaven. Then fall down in everlasting admiration at this mystery, for the blessedness of saints is to see Christ in his glory. John xvii. 24. Now, this lies in an infinite good; this can not be seen in a finite time. Hence saints shall be piercing their eyes deeper and deeper into this mystery, and shall ever see more and more, but never see all; and this is their joy and glory in heaven. Is it so? What think you, is Christ worthy of your love, or not? Look upon all the glory of the field of this world, you may see an end of all perfection, but never here.

5. He is the delights and bosom love of God himself. Prov. viii. 30. Hence John, when he came to set Christ out, (John iii. 35,) "The Father loveth the Son." Now is it so; surely though you see not, taste not this good, yet there it is; now, tell me if this person do not challenge love, would you not be glad to have him? You will say, Can he look upon such a wretch, embrace such a leper as I? No, surely, he will never do it.

Section II.

Consider he makes love to thee. Not one soul that hears me this day but the Lord Jesus is a suitor unto, that now ye would be espoused to him; "He came unto his own, and they received him not." Whatever the secret purpose of Christ is, I regard not. In this evangelical dispensation of grace, he makes love to all. John i. 12. It is clear. Matt. xxii. 2, 3. If there be a gospel in the world, there is this love of Christ yearning toward all, especially all that have this gospel of peace sent to them. Luke ii. 10. "It is tidings of great joy to all people," as law is tidings of great sorrow to all people. Luke ii. 14. Angels from heaven preached this good will towards men. For if the challenge of love from men should be founded on his actual love to some, having died for some, then the offer would be particular. But it is grounded, 1. On his own worth and glory, and hence he challengeth love. 2. On this, for aught I know, he has loved me. So that thou art not so vile but the Lord Jesus' heart is toward thee, and his eye is upon thee for love. But it is not all love, but only some that overcomes. 1. Now it is real love.

2. Frequent love. 3. Constant. 4. Pure love he makes to thee.

1. It is real love. When the gospel and ministers seek for love, the Lord is real in his desires, there is no collusion or dissembling, (2 Cor. v. 20,) in Christ's stead, "He that receiveth you receiveth me;" thou thinkest the Lord cares not for thee, nor doth not desire thee, though he doth others; but, —

1. Either the Lord would have thee lothe him or love him. What think you?

2. If the Lord did not make love to thee, he would not be really angry for rejecting of this love; but the Lord is really angry for rejecting it, and wroth with nothing so much as that. Ps. ii. 12. Here he swears in his wrath, (Ps. xcv. 11,) when he opens his bosom for thee to rest in, and thou wilt not.

3. Look but upon the dealings of God with thee. 1. Hast thou not oft thought some in hell better than thee? Why, the ruin of millions of men is to win love from thee. Jer. iii. 8, 9, 10. 2. Hath not the Lord sent many a mercy to thee, not one but was to win thee? Ps. lxxxi. 10, 11, 12. 3. Hath not the Lord withheld many from thee, as here in this wilderness? Jer. iii. 3, 4. 4. Hath not the Lord sent many sorrows, terrors, fears, cares, wearisome businesses, that thou hast wished an end of life? This is love. Hos. ii. 6. 5. Hath not the Lord moved thy heart many a time toward him by persuasions, arguments which have a power to move the heart? This is love, (Hos. xi. 4.) "cords of a man." 6. Hath not the Lord oft melted thy heart for mercies, as David, when he might have killed Saul? Truly, you may feel his love which is much toward you; that which keeps off thy heart from love is, the Lord intends it not to me, he is not plain with me. But he sends to thee his plain gospel, which thou art to attend unto; and he takes fittest seasons to speak to thee now in the time of thy health. And does he not oft visit thy heart when thou art alone?

2. It is fervent, vehement, earnest love. Sometimes a suitor is real, but he is not earnest. Now, thus the Lord is. 1. The Lord longs for this. Deut. v. 29. 2. Pleads for this, (Jer. ii. 5.) "What iniquity," etc. 3. Thinks long for this time, (Jer. xiii. 27,) "Jerusalem will not be made clean; when shall it once be?" 4. Mourns when he hath not this, (Ezek. vi. 9,) "Broken with their whorish heart." 5. Content to give away any thing for it, all the love of Christ is founded on this. 6. If thou comest not presently, he is content to wait that he may be gracious.

3. It is constant and continual; there is not a moment, thou dost not so oft breathe, as thou mayst see and taste love. Is.

xxvii. 3, lxv. 2. 1. After all thy whorish departing from God, that if man should do so, no man would own, yet he saith, "Return to me;" thou seest never a creature but thou hast loved more than Christ; yet return. 2. When God threatens most terribly, and sets his fury on record, yet then there he minds nothing but love. Jer. xxxvi. 2, 3. 3. When none else will own and pity thee, thou art so vile, yet (Ezek. xvi. 2, 3) the Lord saith, "Live, then is a time of love." 4. Nay, when thou hast cast away thyself as a forlorn creature, yet (Hos. xiv. 3) "In thee the fatherless find mercy." 5. When he hath thee in his arms ready to give thee up, yet then, "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?" Hos. xi. 8. I tell thee, if one sparkle of his eternal blasting displeasure should fall upon thee, it would be so intolerable that it would sink thee; his love is as strong as death; no water can quench it. O, it is not so with man, or great men. Once repulsed is enough; why should the Lord do so here? Many think time is past. It is not so. It is the temptation of them that have time, not of them that want it. Take heed this make thee not despise him.

4. It is a pure love. Others make love for their own ends, but the Lord hath no need of thee, or of thy love. He could raise up of stones children of praise; he could have gone to others; he could have, and can fetch, his glory out of thy ruin. He was blessed before all worlds: and by all thy sins thou dost but throw stones against the wind, or snowballs against the sun. Why doth he do it? O, it is thy good. He pities thee, as once Jerusalem, to look upon thy destruction and desolation. As it is with the elect, they have wrath before their eyes, and hence persuade others; so the Lord Jesus.

Section III.

Consider it is nothing else but love the Lord looks for, or cares for. Love looks for nothing but love, (Prov. viii. 17,) and this is the end of all election, to be holy before him in love; and, mark it, if it be a stayed love that constrains thee to him, you can not wrong him. As if you come and persuade one to murder his child, he can not; so if persuaded to despise, O, bowels of heartbreaking love. 2 Cor. v. And surely it is admirable love. What if it were thy goods, thy Isaac to be sacrificed, thy body to be burned, it was nothing; but he desires only love, only thy heart, which has forged so much villany against him. Let him never be called upon, or professed, if not worthy of this. After all, is this all? Yes, no portion he cares for; and when he has this, he has all. Wonder at this, O angels!

Section IV.

Consider what he will do for thee, how he will love thee, if thou wilt thus love him.

1. He will set thee next himself in honor, (Ps. xlv. 9;) that as the Lord Jesus is next to God, sits at his right hand, so here, which is an honor that the angels have not, who are nowhere called Christ's spouse; hence never had such a union, hence never shall partake of that honor of saints.

2. He will enrich thee. As it is with man and wife, all that he has is hers; so himself and all his glory, his God, his Father, his kingdom is thine. Prov. viii. 21, they that love me inherit something; others nothing; no, nothing indeed, only shows of good; and they find it so when they awake, nothing their own, nothing long; that let thy outward man, yea, thy inward, be never so poor, thou shalt by him be heir of all.

3. He will counsel thee. Hence David (Ps. lxxiii.) made choice of God: "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel." No greater curse than to be left to the guidance of a man's own counsel; but here there shall not be any strait, but the Lord will show thee a way out of it, either by his prudence or providence. There shall not be any secret of Christ that thou desirest to know, but, as Christ told them, "You are my friends," so you are my spouse; hence all his secrets shall be opened to thee; there shall not be one act of thy life but ordered by infinite prudence, and wisdom, and love. Sometimes we are befooled in our own counsels, and left to them to teach us to depend on the Lord the more; yet thereby shall come out such good that it shall be among us as with Joseph's brethren.

4. He will dwell with thee as a man must dwell with his wife, (John xiv. 23;) that the great Mediator, that passes by kings and princes, and will not look on them, should come and dwell with thee. This is better than to have the presence of kings, the guard of angels, better than heaven itself, that he should dwell where is nothing worthy to entertain him, only something to grieve him. Now this is, —

1. A constant assistance of the Spirit; that, let the soul go where he will, — be brought to never so low an ebb, — yet Christ will not out, but some stirrings, sighings, lookings, pantings after Christ; when heart and strength fail, yet God, etc.; when ready to give all for lost, then consider, as Ps. lxxiii. 2. If he does depart, he will not be long, but return again; and those that know his affection know it so to be. Is. liv. "For a little moment," etc. So the Lord may depart; and, when his presence

is a little more esteemed, come again with everlasting mercies. As a man may know many weaknesses by his wife, yet she having not bestowed her heart on any other, he will return; so if thou canst say yet I am the Lord's, he will return.

5. He will rejoice in thee and over thee, (Zeph. iii. 17,) as a bridegroom does over the bride. Not because of any beauty in thee, for there is none, but because given in marriage of the Father, and for his own sake. This day thou shalt no sooner set thy heart on Christ but he falls in love with thee, and will take thee with joy; thou thinkest he will be angry if thou closest with him and love him; no, it will be the joy of heaven, of Jesus Christ himself.

6. He will exceedingly comfort thee; and look as it is with tender husbands, then they comfort most when most sorrows betide them; for who could endure his wife should be always drooping? So even then when nothing doth or can comfort thee, the Lord will. Is. liv. 6. For the Lord doth not always comfort; but when in need, as with the patriarchs, then God appeared, when they were at worst; and these are abundant comforts. 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 5. You shall not need to scramble for it, as many do, whose hearts do not love Christ in truth as yet.

7. He will put up all wrongs, and bear exceedingly with thee. Many think, even when God hath sealed love to them, if any little sin be committed, then they are cast off; no, if under the law, so indeed, but when espoused to him, it is not weaknesses nor willfulness can make the Lord cast thee away; but he will heal the one, and afflict thee (yet not cast thee off) for the other; (Ps. lxxxix. 33,) "My loving-kindness will I never take away." Yea, he will forgive both; (Luke vii. 47,) "Much forgiven because she loved much." Nay, thy wrongs shall be an occasion to make him love thee more; (Rom. v.) "Where sin abounds, grace abounds."

8. He will never part with thee. Hos. ii. 19. Once love him, and he will never lose thee.

1. No sin shall part thee and him; for Christ, when he enters into marriage covenant, does not suspend his love on our grace or holiness, — then he might leave quickly, — but on his own grace to wash away our filthiness. Eph. v. 25, 26. If a husband marries a woman only for so long as she is in health, then when sickness comes he may depart; but *e contra*, if to take away her sicknesses, then they can not hinder; nothing but adultery can part. Now, that they can not do, for nothing breaks till covenant is broken; and the covenant here is everlasting, and so undertaken for by the Lord that it can never be broken.

2. No miseries can, (Rom. viii. 35, 36, 37;) "Can tribulation?" It makes man leave us; but this is peculiar to Christ —he will not leave.

3. Death can not. It must part man and wife, though loved never so dearly before, but here not; but then he will come himself and fetch thee, (John xiv. 1, 2, 3,) take thy soul to the bride chamber, there to be with him forever and ever; and he will keep the dust of thy blessed body, and not lose one dust of it, and at the last day raise it; and then, when others shall cry out, yonder is he whom I have grieved, then shalt thou lift up thy head; yonder comes my husband, to comfort me, to crown me, that I may dwell with him. It shall be the blessed day to thee. And when judgment is done, thou shalt go with thy beloved from the air up to heaven with a shout, and live in his love and dearest embracing of thee; and this he will do for thee, so poor and vile in thine own eyes. Now, will you have him, and that now, or no?

Section V.

Object. 1. If the Lord be so desirous of me, why doth he not overcome me?

Ans. If the Lord doth it, it is by these cords of love; and if not, the brand of a reprobate is upon thee.

Object. 2. But I do love him already.

Ans. Is it with such a love as makes you unable to resist him, to wrong him? As the apostle said, "We can not speak against the truth, but for it;" for if not, it is nought. There is a natural love to Christ, as to one that doth thee good, and for thine own ends; and spiritual, for himself, whereby the Lord only is exalted. Hast thou this?

Object. 3. But I do not hate Christ.

Ans. If any man do not love him with a positive love, let him be anathema.

Object. 4. I can not love him.

Ans. 1. What canst thou love else? 2. Thou canst not love him so well as thou shouldst; therefore close with him, and love will follow. 3. Get the Lord to overcome thy heart. Jer. iii. 19.

Quest. How shall I do it?

Ans. 1. Set him before thee. "Who will commit lewdness while her husband looks on?" Ps. xvi. 8.

2. See what content thou givest Christ by love. Smallest duties coming from love are accepted. What makes thee wrong him to please thyself? Let a thing cross thee, yet it contents Christ Jesus.

3. Get him, and wait by faith on him to overcome thy heart, and the work is done then. Now, will you do this or not? If not, say, then, you have had a fair offer, and tell the devils so, when thou goest down to hell, as it may be thou mayst ere long. Men talk of terrible sermons, but these sink deepest. Tell me, dost thou love the Lord only? Wilt thou keep lusts or Christ alone? If so, then look to it. In this country, a woman killed her child, and she said when she did it, her child smiled upon her. Wilt thou kick Christ's love now when he smiles upon thee? Afterward she repented, but it was too late. Women, when they have a mind to some other, murder their husbands; but if known, burned they must be. But wilt thou have him and love him alone? O, if persuaded to this, then happy forever! Let this day be the beginning of eternal glory to thy soul, and the God of peace be with thee.

CHAPTER VII.

SHOWETH THAT A MAN HATH NO POWER IN HIMSELF TO DO ANY SPIRITUAL WORK, BUT THAT HE MUST RECEIVE ALL FROM CHRIST.

Use 4. Hence we see a necessity, if ever we look to have communion with Christ, to do all spiritual work, all we do (*theologice*) from the mighty power of Christ, from the life and spirit of Christ. To bring forth no spiritual act but from Christ, and for Christ, (I shall put both in one, and the latter into the first; for none act truly from him but it is for him;) for you know if a woman bring forth children to any other but her own husband, that woman hath lost her chastity; so when men shall bring forth the fruits of obedience to any other, from any other but from Christ, they lose their virginity, their chastity, without which no communion with Christ; for I have ever made two parts or degrees of Christian chastity, as it is in outward chastity.

1. The soul sets its chief affections on Christ alone; that look as it is with a woman, though she can not do much, nor deserve his love, yet her heart is with him; herself is his, (Cant. vi. 3,) "I am my beloved's."

2. The soul brings forth fruits of love only unto Christ; i. e., from Christ and for Christ, as, in marriage, the woman brings forth fruit of her womb to her husband; and this is set down

plainly. Rom. vii. 4. The first we have handled. Now, a little of this. And that I may press this, which is of much use to you, give me leave to express myself in these conclusions.

Section I.

Conclusion 1. That all men living nakedly, considered in themselves, have lost all power to do any thing that is good. Rom. iii. 12, "None that doeth good." 1. His light is quite extinct and his eyes quite out; hence said to "sit in darkness and the shadow of death." Matt. iv. 16. Now, a shadow is a privation of some light; this of all light; hence called darkness itself. Take the blindest Indian, he is a witness of this truth, and a right picture of a soul fallen from God. Hence, because he can not see, he can not do. 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2. All that life he had to act well is lost too. Eph. ii. 1, "He is dead in trespasses and sins;" he can not breathe, nor speak, nor think, nor do any thing that is good; I say, nakedly considered in himself. And hence look upon a man quite forsaken of God in hell; there you may see, as in a lively looking-glass, what every man living is when the Lord leaves him; he can blaspheme, he can not love him; he can contemn God, he can not esteem him; he can wish there were no God to punish him; he can not submit unto God, though he leaves the most heavy load upon him; and you see not yourselves, until you see yourselves here, and see yourselves thus.

Section II.

Conclusion 2. That unto some men especially, nay, unto all men almost, though vile, yet more or less the Lord gives a power to act, and live, and move, and to do many spiritual duties, or good duties from themselves. For as there is a breadth in the ways of grace, that every Christian hath not the like measure of grace, so there is a breadth or latitude in the ways of sin. Every sinner breaks not forth into the like measure of sin, but some are far better than others; as the three grounds that were bad, yet one better than another. Now, how comes this about? Why, the Lord gives that power to act (as all the knowledge of a God) by the light of nature, (falsely so called;) this is the work of God. Rom. i. 19. Hence all terrors, and comforts, and duties of conscience are all from God; so the historical faith of the gospel, which many have, and so to confess and profess no salvation but by Christ, together with a readiness to die in defence of this truth and religion, and joy from this, and reformation of

life upon this; none of these are natural to this soil of a man's soul, but all are planted there by God, (1 Cor. xii. 2, 3;) and so that man can act according to the law, be strict in Sabbaths, frequent in fastings and prayers, etc., it is from God. (Rom. x. 2.) And why doth the Lord work this? It is else no living in the world among men, and because Christ is the *politicum caput*, and hath bought all men in the world to be his servants; hence gives them gifts which he turns for the good of his people; but yet this is the nature of all these abilities that a man acts from the strength and power of them, not from Christ. Micah iv. 5. Other nations "will walk in the name," etc.; and the reason is, —

1. Because every man is under the guidance either of the first or second covenant, and power of either. Now, as the power of the second covenant is to draw a man out of himself to another, and so to make him act from another, so the power of the first is to drive a man into himself by terrors, and fears, and hopes, and rewards, and so to enable him to act from himself; hence it is impossible but they must act ever from themselves. And, —

2. Because, though many good gifts and moral virtues may be said to be supernatural; i. e., above the power of nature to work, yet never above the improvement of nature; for let God work never so many good things in man, nature; i. e., an ill stomach, when diseased, is strongest; there nature turns all into the humor, and so a man dies at last; so the power of sin in nature being more powerful than any grace which by common work is given it, ever turns that grace into itself, and leads it into captivity, bondage, and service of itself; so that there is never a grace but it is made to serve some lust, as in Jehu, in Judas, etc.; and God complains. Is. xliii. 24. So this, I say, is the case of thousands unregenerate, who can do many good things but from themselves, which God hath wrought to; and hence many a child of God hath been long hindered from conversion, and others not converted at all, because they have thought wicked men, whom God minds to damn, are such as have no good, nor do no good, or if they do, they have it not from God; but it is not so with me, for I have and do many good things, which I acknowledge come from God, and I thank God I am not as other men. Now, mark, it is true, nakedly considered, no good could come from unregenerate men, but yet the Lord gives power to many to do; so the Lord has done to thee, and thou hast been thankful for it. And this is common; many account themselves great sinners, but yet they can believe. Many say they can do little; but their desire and will at worse is to do. Tell them

these are not right, unless they come from the Lord; they will say, the Lord doth all, and they acknowledge it, and so I believe, and it is true; but it is not such a work of the Lord as is peculiar to the elect, because when the Lord hath wrought these you act only from them, and hence never feel a want of these, for the Lord never yet wrought any grace in his people, but after they have had it, and tasted of it, he hath more or less deserted them, and so hath made them feel a want of it, and made them fetch it again, with sighs, and groans, and tears. Now, it hath never been so with thee.

Section III.

Conclusion 3. That it is most pleasing to man and agreeable to his nature to act only from himself. As it was with the prodigal, he desired his stock in his own hands, and while any thing lasted, he would never come home; and hence those, John vi. 28. What shall we do to work the works of God? And when Christ spake of faith, they were stumbled there, insomuch that divers did forsake him.

1. Because man's acting from himself is best able to attain his own ends, to which, you know, a man is gently and necessarily carried; for no man out of Christ, but his own ends draw him. Now, Christ crosseth a man's own ends, and to live on him is to live on him that will confound them of their own ends, or else no life there. Hence they live from themselves. As it is with a craftsman or artificer, propounding the gain or credit they may get by being excellent in their trade, may, by their own study and frequency of acts, grow dextrous and very skillful at last, and hence delight in it; so here, profession and practice of religion may be a man's trade which he may drive for his own ends and gain, and hence may desire to be excellent, and (by endeavor) be excellent, and profit exceedingly in many excellent endowments. Hence he acts and works for himself. Rom. i. 14.

2. Because a man naturally knows not how to fetch it from Christ from heaven. Rom. x. 3. Hence it is with them as with a child cast off by the father and put to some hard master; because they have no father to maintain them, they must live as they are and do as well as they can. A man comes to pray, knows not how to fetch strength from Christ, and he must pray, and hence prays as well as he can.

3. Because it is so hard a thing to live upon another. It is easy and sweet to a spiritual heart, but most difficult to any carnal heart. John vi. Christ tells them they must eat his flesh;

they say, "Who can then be saved?" And many departed. Men had rather make holes and keep water in their house than have it far to fetch, and when they come to fetch it to bestow such strength in drawing of it.

4. Because every man thinks he loves and cares for himself best, and sees no God nor Christ caring for or loving of him more than himself. Hence a man plots for himself, and lives for himself, and all from himself. As when Joseph's brethren saw their brother, then they came down and lived upon him. Before, they came to him, indeed, but with their money, to live of themselves. And thus it was with the young man — "Sell all and have riches in heaven." No. He loved himself, and cared for himself better than so; hence would not commit and give away all to Christ.

5. Because whatever a man does from himself, either it is good, or he thinks it so, or hopes, if not, God will accept it. Some evil in it, perhaps, but he hath his allowances, which will make it go; some good desires or faith in Christ, and hence hopes; if not, thinks God will accept of what comes from himself. As, (Prov. xxi. 2,) "All a man's ways are right in his own eyes." And truly nature and Satan have ever been imitators and apes of God, to forge and make grace like true grace; hence deceived. This, being pleasing to men, is the practice of most men; yea, of all men out of Christ. And this is one of the great part of the inward, secret, subtile, spiritual whoredom of the soul. Thus men may sorrow, when yet there is little true sorrow, and so in other cases.

Section IV.

Conclusion 4. That all these works, though good in themselves, yet are most vile before the Lord. As Christ speaks of the Pharisees, it is abomination in the sight of God, which is glorious before man. Luke xvi. 15.

1. Because hereby the soul deprives Christ of the end of his coming; for all men having lost the stock and power to live, the Lord hence will trust no man with it again. Hence puts it into a surer and better hand, that thither poor, blind, dead creatures might fly for life; and when they are there, live there like bees on their honey. John vi. 27, xvii. 23. He might never have looked after you, and will you despise him now? What folly and unkindness is this, that when your pits are dry, and bottles empty, and souls miserable here, you will not (I do not say sip) when water runs by your door, but not live!

2. Because whatever comes from self, it is ever for self. A man can do nothing from himself, but his last end is self. As it is with waterworks, they rise no higher than the spring. Gen. xi. 4. "This Babel I have built." Dan. iv. 30. And a man that has but common grace; look as by virtue of that grace or gift of God he may act for God, because it came from God; so nature and sin being more powerful than that grace, hence he never so acts for God, but in the last place acts for itself, as Jehu. And so a man makes himself his own god.

3. Because whatever a man does from himself, he will grow proud of it. Rom. iv., "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Hence Joab sent to David to take the city, that he might have the crown. This robs Christ of the glory.

4. Because whatever work is not done by virtue of the Lord Jesus, is a dead work, which a living God, and a living Christ, and a living Spirit loathe. Heb. ix. 14, "Sprinkle your consciences from dead works." Deadly works are sins; dead works are good works done, but not from the principle of the life of faith, but life of nature. Now, as conscience is the principle of the life of nature, so Christ is the principle of a Christian life. Col. iii. 1; John v. 10–12. For it is not sanctification that is the principle of life, but the life itself that flows from it as from the union of soul and body. The soul is not the life, but the principle of it; hence, as soon as it out, the body is dead; so, etc. And do you not find it thus, when as you do many duties, how tedious, wearisome are they? Yet must be done; this is a dead work. What comfort, what peace is there when you have done them, because not from life?

5. Because what comes from self comes from all sin; it is dipped, and dyed, and tainted, and poisoned with all sin, in a manner. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

6. Because when a man will act from himself, and not suffer Christ to act for him, he will not have Christ to reign over him; he pulls down the kingdom of God that should be within him. For when a man professeth Christ is King of his church, he is now a King in name. When a man feels an impossibility to rule himself, and hence desireth and chooseth Christ to rule, now Christ is a King by choice. When the soul, after this choice, depends on Christ for what he chose him for, and the Lord works, now Christ is a King indeed. Now, if you will not have the Lord to reign over you, you will be found enemies to the Lord's kingdom.

Section V.

Conclusion 5. Hence it will follow, the soul is to act wholly and only from the Lord Jesus Christ; and whatever fruits of love it shows to Christ, to bring them forth from Christ. Which doth not only concern them that never yet knew Christ, and yet pride up themselves in what they have and do, but those that be in Christ in a special manner. For (John xv. 2) "Every branch in me that brings not forth fruit." It is not meant of one, indeed, in Christ, for he shall bring forth fruit; but every branch — i. e., by outward profession, so that it brings not forth fruit, but appears fair, and deceives man — God will cast away. And without me, even ye (disciples) can do nothing.

Quest. 1. How is the soul to act from Christ only, when it hath life, especially the elect?

Quest. 2. By what means may this be done, to get and keep this chastity?

Quest. 1. How is the soul to act from Christ alone when there is sanctification within?

Ans. 1. If the soul feel no power to act from grace received, as saints sometimes do, either after God's deserting them, or their forsaking God long, or after some hardening sin, then, it is clear, the soul, in this case, is (though not in a way of carelessness) to depend upon the Lord Jesus, that he would quicken and help. As David, after his gross fall, "Lord, create in me a clean heart;" and Is. lxiii. 17, "Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear? O, return!" In this case, the soul is not to bring the soul to God, but God to the soul. As many a Christian can not prize nor love the Lord nor his ways, he is not to say, I will bring my soul and offer it him; but look to the Lord that he would raise my dead affections again. As the centurion of his servant, "Speak the word," etc. Christ marveled at his faith. Men think, when they feel nothing, that they must and can work it out, and hence comes one of these three things.

1. Either the soul can not love Christ when it sees such laws it can not submit to. And hence, a Christian once said to me, "If the least thing was left for me to do of myself, I could not love Christ; but now, that when brought low and can do nothing, he brings all the help we need. This makes the spouse go to the bosom of her husband. Ps. cxvi. 6, 7. Or else, —

2. It can not do it; for corruption in a saint is too hard for his grace; "I am but a child, and thy people many." 1 Kings iii. 7. Hence he must be strong in the Lord. Or, —

3. If it do, it never has any peace in what it does, the

duties never so well done. Whereas otherwise, the poorest duty done from Christ, (witness Heb. xi. 4, 5,) as a child begot of the father, he will own, but other children not. If any poor tired heart that hears me this day, thou hast been making thy brick, and promises and vows will not help; now away to the Lord; if ever help now it is when most helpless.

2. If you can do any thing savingly good, the soul is bound now (by the power of faith) to stir up itself to act, though not to trust to it alone; for sometimes the soul hath the regenerate part uppermost, and the prevailing Spirit of God, (Ps. xxi. 3,) which comes to him, and gives it power to act before the soul comes to it. Now, a man is bound to act, because it is from Christ now. Hence Timothy was to stir up the gift. 2 Tim. i. 6. Hence complained of them Is. lxiv. 8, "None stirs up himself to take hold on the Lord." A man must stir up himself to believe, as well as other graces; hence "the kingdom of heaven is taken with violence," and though corruption is stronger than grace, yet grace, assisted with the Spirit, is stronger than it, which is never quite out of the soul, but it is in the soul. 1 John iv. 4, "Stronger is he that is in you." And it is said professedly, "He purgeth himself, and keepeth himself: the evil one toucheth him not." 1 John v. 18. But mark, trust not barely to this; but when you do this, withal remember, Lord, I can not hold out in this unless thou dost help me. But know, (Is. xxvi.) "The Lord is the rock of my strength." And "If you, by the Spirit, mortify," etc. Rom. viii. 13. Therefore, ever hold up sails, but look for a wind. And if a man be not to do this, then when any sinful temptation comes, if a man do not find the Spirit and strength ready at hand to help, if he be not to stir up himself against it, he is to suffer himself to be carried down by it. Hence a man may neglect all duties a long time, if he do not find the Spirit assisting, if so be a man must not stir himself up, and so (will some say) a man may. May! What shall I say to such a sluggish soul, but sleep on? But know it, the Lord will awaken thee, when you shall say, O that I had improved the talent I had! And if you do find Christ in such a condition, know it, they be but the last visits of Christ before he departs. You can do more than you do, and the Lord will have you do it.

Object. But I can not do it for good ends without Christ.

Ans. Yet do the things as far as you can, else if you owe another a debt, and will not pay, because not for a good end, that excuse will not serve. So you owe the Lord your lives, your spirits, your abilities; lay them out for the Lord, though evil be

in them; be humbled for that. Is this good requital, to say you find your hearts dead in prayer, and God must do all, and there leave it?

3. You are to expect and look for power from the Lord Jesus in the use of means, all known means. For faith fetches all from Christ; hence we must go thither where Christ is to be found, and he dwells in his house, in his ordinances; therefore there you must depend upon him. As it is with a merchant, he wades not over the sea for pearls, but gets into his shop, and there he sits still; so here, (Matt. xiii.,) "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man." Hence you that know you can do nothing, being under a spirit of conviction, and hence do nothing, under a spirit of sloth and neglect of means, by virtue of a spirit of presumption, and say, Christ must do all; I say, you take not the right course for the Lord to help you in. The Lord will never be a slave to thy sloth, but thou shalt be like a shrub, never to see good when it comes, and shalt die in horror with this — O, I might have done more. Hence you are worse than the other, that think if a man fasts, prays, watches against his distempers, mourns for want of Christ and grace, and follows God hard here, he is a legal Christian. Why, these are but his own works, and this is not living on Christ. I confess bare using them, or trusting to them, is not, but he that lives not on Christ in use of means (these and all other means) to find Christ, or enjoy more of Christ, shall never have him. Neither do I know what turning God's grace into wantonness is, if this be not; and under a liberty to be a servant of corruption. I know not whether it be thus with any, but if I did, I would pity them.

4. If the soul can not every moment live on Christ, — i. e., for every particular act have a distinct act of faith; for this can not be, — yet every fit season that it can, it ought to look up to the Lord for life and fresh strength. Pray, as it is every fit season. And, as he brings forth fruit, so he goes for fruit in season. Ps. i. 3. And when the soul does this, the Spirit of the Lord helps, when the act is ceased.

Now, the fit seasons are, —

1. At beginning of any action, as prayer, hearing, reading. All the time a man is in his journey, or in his work, he is carried on by the act of faith at first setting out. The reach of faith is long, and continues all prayers; all the duty throughout the act of faith is short. Now, the Lord looks to his people according to the first.

2. When our act begins to die, as Moses lifted up his hands, and, when they were heavy, Aaron and Hur supported them again.

3. When a man feels himself strong, now apt to be self-confident; now, Lord, for an humble heart! And thus you are to live on Christ, which, if done, would make a Christian's life glorious, and give infinite content to the heart of Christ. But here is the misery — either the hearts are full and need not, or slothful and care not for living so. That truly I do not wonder to hear and see so many withering trees, as though blasted by wrath, because you fetch not all out of this stock; and Christ is such a stranger, because you are so seldom with him, to act and bring forth fruit to him.

Section VI.

Consider of the means to act from Christ Jesus; and, indeed, herein lies the skill and life of a Christian; and this is the complaint of many a soul: Christ is full, and he is not for himself, but for those that want, and I come to him when I want it, and yet I find no help; and hence many are brought to think either it is in vain to come to Christ, or else I have no faith in Christ. I will therefore premise these three things: —

1. That a false, double, treacherous, disloyal heart to Christ can not expect any thing it comes for unto Christ. As it is with a woman, that though others do not, yet her husband knows she is fallen in league with some other man, he will be strange to her, and will not do any thing for her; John ii. *ult.*, "He knew what was in man;" as it is in grafts; James i. 7, 8, Let not a double-minded man think to receive any thing at the hands of the Lord. For that is the nature of man under the power of any lust; it makes all serve it, even Christ himself, which he will never do. "I am weary of your new moons," saith the Lord; and you fast and pray, and have no answer, for you fast for debate; and therefore I take a man considered as broken off from the power of lusts, not one that feels himself under the power of it; for such a one may be delivered from it, such a soul as can say, Much ado have I to feel my sin, and to be willing to part with it, but now I am; here is the soul I speak of.

2. That the Lord, in the dispensation of grace to his people, is wholly free to give it when he will; for a man that works for his wages must in justice have his wages when his work is done, but he that begs for his living must be content to stay. We live by faith and free gift, not by works and deserts, and hence must wait and stay. Micah vii. 7. Hence let any man think sensibly to receive what he goes for to the Lord Jesus presently, as many feel a want of grace, and think the Lord hath promised to help;

and now how would it make for his honor to give, but find it not, and hence grow sad or discouraged, and think it is in vain to seek? No, no; Christ's hour is not yet come, when you think it is; John ii., "My hour is not yet come;" and hence many get nothing because they lie out of the way of the covenant, viz., to think, O, the Lord owes me nothing, and I deserve the contrary.

3. That no man is to look to receive all that which he comes to the Lord for, but only so much as is fit for him. A man may feel much straitness, and he would have many enlargements; he finds much deadness, and he would have deep, overflowing affections, and he comes to the Lord for it, and the Lord gives some; doth he not? Do you not find it? Can you say you seek the Lord, and attend on the Lord in vain with these hypocrites? Matt. iii. 14. True, but yet methinks more would be better How do you know that? I think so, that it would be more for his honor. You think so; then it seems you have one eye more than Christ, and that he is very careless and foolish in raising his own honor. O, abhor those thoughts! he gives you such a coat as is fit for you; such a sail as fits your boat; such shoes as fit your feet; Ps. xxi. 5, "Honor and majesty hast thou fitted for him:" therefore do not look to receive any more than is fit for you, and know it, that is best for you. The physician prescribes that which is fit, not that which is most desired of the patients. If he will not accept of this, he will not look after them. 1 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

4. Think not to get any thing from the Lord Jesus with ease; I mean to the fleshly part. It hath been an old complaint, I go to Christ, and fish all night, and can catch nothing; and why? here is the cause: they can not get it easily, and therefore they can not get it at all; yea, there it is, Heb. xi. 6. This is one of the two main handles of faith, "He is rewarder of all them that diligently seek him," not negligently; and hence at their first conversion how doth Christ's fruits overflow, and his Jordan rise above its banks! and what a deal does a Christian gain, yet not afterward; so in time of great trouble, O, it is because you seek him diligently! Therefore, in prescribing means, do not say this is hard, and so depart as those did on the very same ground. John vi. 60.

Section VII.

The Means are these: —

Means 1. Labor for a comprehending knowledge what is the love of Christ to thee: there is a double knowledge of Christ's love.

1. That he loves me; and this very apprehension fetches in warmth and life into the heart: "In thy favor is life."

2. What that love is, and that in all the dimensions of it; and, beloved, this is that which fills a man, (Eph. iii. 18, 19,) that as it is with women when the fullness of the husband's love is seen, it knits the heart invincibly to him, and makes her do any thing for him; so here. And as we say of trees, if the tree begins to wither and die, the only way is, not to cast water on the branches, to pray for water and dews from heaven on them, but water the root. Love is the next root of all grace; love Christ, and you will never be weary of doing for Christ; love him, and he will love you. Prov. viii. 17. Now, what kindles love so much as this comprehending knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and his love, this will make a man a burning beacon of love, make a man melt into love, which is as strong as death; much water can not quench it. 2 Cor. v. 14, "Love of Christ constrains." Gal. v. 6, "Faith works by love." Faith is our feet whereby we come to Christ, love is our hand whereby we work for Christ; now, let any chirurgeon's servant come to a chirurgeon with a broken arm, and tell him he can do no work for him, therefore desire him to give strength to do it. Come, saith he, let me heal your arm first. No, by no means; let me first do your work, that so you may heal, and I may feel my arm to be whole. It can never be. So it is many a Christian's course, Lord, let me do thy work; and hence he cries, Lord, give me strength, and then falls to do it, and can not without pain, because his love is broken. Many say, I will go to Christ, and act for Christ, and then I will think the Lord loves me; but never find it: first, see and comprehend the love of the Lord. And truly, this is the reason why no heart, no strength to act for God, unless it be in a wearisome manner; and why? O, love is out! and why is that out? why, it is not comprehended by the eye of faith, it is despised by some, other things are sweet to them, or it is forgotten by others. Men remember not what once they were, and what the Lord has done; it is seen a little, and hence a little life and strength, but it is comprehended by few. O, sinful times! O, unkind world! never was my heart so dead, saith one; never so

straitened and shut up, saith another; never so feeble in all duties, saith another; why, you see, and taste, and sip of this love, but you feed not heartily, abundantly, on it. Never didst thou think so little of this love; for though Christ will convey rich grace to his people, yet it shall be by love. Christians will come to Christ, and when they receive and feel the good they come for, they will think of Christ's love, and that he loves them: no, first come unto the Lord Jesus; being once come, know he will not cast thee away, (John vi. 37;) then think of this love; stay here, first feed here, and you may act, and then the Lord will convey strength and power, and enable you hereunto. For though when a man trusts to his love, as Peter without faith, a man will fall because he trusts to an arm of flesh; yet, when faith employs love, the work is very great. As a father has a child who must keep at home with him, but he has never a steward to lay out that estate for him that he means to give him; but when an able steward, now he gives his son richly. So here.

Quest. How shall I comprehend it?

Ans. First, the apostle prays for it. Secondly, see what it is by his description, and meditate on it.

1. The breadth, i. e., the same love wherewith the Lord comprehends all saints, as Abraham, etc.: thou art as dear to the Lord as he or any in heaven; nay, it may be, did cost more: not a cross, not a mercy, but it is common (for substance) unto all saints.

2. The length, from eternity to eternity, nothing can part, nothing shall part; all other things are but summer swallows, that build with us for a time.

3. The depth, that the Lord should look upon thee when in thy pest-house, when no eye pitied thee, when as low as the grave, nay, as low as hell, nay, lower; for they in hell would come out, thou wouldst not. Never think to see what infinite love is, till thou seest infinite wrath.

4. The hight, to be as happy angels, and more so; nay, to be all one with Christ, and in Christ, and loved with the same love Christ is. John xvii. 23, 26.

5. When thou seest it thus, yet it is the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. As children can not tell how parents love them, will you do thus? It is with many Christians as it is with many trees; the tree is good, and the soil is good, and rain, dews, sun, husbandman good, yet it begins to die; then now nothing is wanting, but only to be set a little deeper, that it may take more root of the soil. And so here, there is nothing wanting in many

a Christian but to be set a little deeper, and to take more rooting in the Lord's love. Faith roots itself in God's love, and now prospers by love. The eye is but little, yet can comprehend a mighty world quickly; man's mind is but little, yet can comprehend, though not the infiniteness, yet an infinite. If there be this light of glory, see by it all your poor sad hearts that conceive nothing but terror and holiness in God; if you see it not, know it here is your work now; for the first work is to get faith, then to get love, then to act from faith by love. Now, the Lord hath wrought the first, and thou art busy a doing the third work, not remembering the second.

Means 2. Content not thyself with feeling a want of supply, but labor to feel a need of supply from the Lord Jesus; for many a Christian feels a want of grace from Christ, brokenness, etc., sees he has nothing, and is sometime by fits troubled for the want of it; but he can be well content, though he have no supply, having somewhat else to ease and content him; he feels no need of supply, so as he can not be without it, that his spirit fails unless the Lord Jesus in mercy give it, and therefore must have it, there is a necessity of it. Hence he never finds supply, and wonders at it why it is so. And here it is, here is his wound, and so brings up an ill report of the Lord, saying, he is loth to give; and of the ordinances of the Lord, it is in vain to seek; and truly so it is to seek so. For let thy condition be never so miserable, if thou feelest a need of supply, the Lord will make bare his arm, and work wonders; bring heaven out of hell, joy out of sorrow, and light out of the thickest darkness, and floods out of dry ground, (Is. xliv. 17, 18;) when the ground is dry and parched, no moisture left; now the Lord pours out water on this soul. Is. xliv. 3; Heb. iv. *ult.* Many come to the Lord for grace, and find it not. Methinks I hear the Lord speaking thus to his people: I love you dearly, and I am content to give you any thing you need; but you do not need my grace, my Spirit, my presence; i. e., you feel not a need of it, for if you had it now, you would not prize it much, nor keep it long. My precious grace must not be spilt. Many know their wants and distempers, and know there is no help in themselves, and see all fullness in Christ, and hence come to him, but find none, because they can be content though the Lord deny: no, nor never shall, unless you feel the woe of your wants, that your spirit fails if the Lord send not in supply. Is. lvii. 16, "I will not contend, lest the Spirit fail." Hence there God promiseth to dwell, to send and create peace and comfort; for what is the reason that Christians at first beginnings seek peace and mercy, and have abundantly then? Why, truly,

I was long time before I had any thing; but when my spirit began to fail, and I gave all for gone, and could out no more, now the Lord helped and pitied me; but where are those comforts and that presence of the Lord now? Truly, now you think the worst is past, and would be glad of the life of Christ, and grace from Christ; but if not, you have a little, your state is safe, and so can lie without putting yourself to a necessity of it. Is it not thus? Is not this your very wound? If it be, for the Lord's sake, then, get it healed, and do as people in Christ's time: those that were well, and had not desperate diseases, commonly came not to him; but when the disease was desperate, you know the fame of Christ being spread abroad, then they brought their sick and laid them before his merciful eyes, then they looked for the laying on of his hand, or a word of his mouth, and all were healed. So do you: you have heard of the fame of Christ, and seen others humbled, others pardoned; lay thy sick soul — but look that it be sick — before his eyes, and so look for one word of his mouth, as the woman of Canaan; he may deny for a time, yet she must have it, and the Lord will say, "Be it unto thee according to thy faith;" not according to thy deserts: thou wilt have it; I must give it; thou diest without it; behold, I live to revive thee, and therefore to give it. You come to prayer, and word, and want many things, but find them not. O, come, therefore, Lord! I must have, I can not do without supply. Not but that a Christian must wait, and be content humbly, but not carelessly. Therefore think within thyself, —

1. What is there that I need but this, the presence of God, the life of God, etc.? Is it not enough in heaven, where there is no wealth nor comforts else? and is it not sufficient now?

2. May I have it on this condition, (I must have it, I am resolved not to go without it,) Rev. xxii. 17. If you will come, take it. Are the terms so sweet?

3. Do wicked men thirst more and more after their lusts, and is Christ, and his grace, and his presence no better, that I have enough of them quickly? God forbid there should be such a heart.

4. Doth the least sin so exceedingly go to the heart of my God, and shall I suffer it not only to act here, and tempt here, but remain alive here?

5. Is not the Lord, after all love shown me, worthy of infinite (not a little) honor from me? and doth he deserve all, and must I not, shall I not give it him before I die? It must, it shall be so. Now, when here you feel a need, know it that you are at the very door of relief. I conceive this is the great door at which

Christ enters into the soul. The root of faith — i. e., the author, object, and foundation of faith — is out of a man's self; the door of faith which opens to all treasures is in a man's self. This door is not any good in us, for then we should have somewhat to boast of; nor sin in us, for that shuts out God from us; nor knowledge of want, for that the devils have; but sense of want, which when the saints have, now the door is opened for the Lord Jesus in all his fullness to come in.

Now, "if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

Section VIII.

Use 5. To all the churches of the Lord Jesus here planted in these western parts of the world, to maintain your church chastity and virginity, you have a name of it abroad, pure, chaste, virgin churches, not polluted with the mixtures of men's inventions, not defiled with the company of evil men; pure ordinances, pure people, pure churches, which is the cause of the scoffs and enmity of some, but of the desire and joy of others. O, if there, how happy I, and how blessed they! Take heed you do not defile yourselves again. Open whoredom is too gross, too shameful, to yield to man's inventions, to open the door for all comers into the church; but take heed of secret whoredoms and departings from Christ; for think of this speech when you see me dead, that of all the churches in the world, the Lord Jesus carries a most jealous eye over these, for whom he has done such great things; and I know it, he takes exceeding ill your secret wantonness and whoredoms of heart: the Lord has kept you hitherto; look you maintain it, for you may be soon deflowered again. Few churches retain their purity long; aged, gray-haired purity is seldom seen. I will tell you of the several temptations (some at least) that may prevail to the defilement of you.

First. Spiritual defilement is forsaking of the husband, a total secret forsaking of Christ; for here is the temptation to it, viz., God's withdrawing himself in his ordinances from his ordinances. For three sorts of temptations make men fall back.

1. By persecution; and there many fall (though some stand out) as in the stony land.

2. By peace; and here many fall like the thorny ground; like sailors that in a storm at sea, every man is ready, and will be pulling his rope; but when a calm, then go to their cabins, and there fall asleep, and here many fall in this place, and others stand it out.

3. By the Lord's withdrawing from them, as those, Mal. iii.

14; and here the great ones fall. Many come to enjoy ordinances, and persecution vexed them not; the world is base, it troubles them not; and they think to find much, but do not, but the Lord withdraws, and they can get no good; hereupon their false hearts discover themselves, they draw back from God, and lie still; whereas the saints cry the more into themselves, and find out the cause of it, and then the Lord helps them. Is. lxiii. 17. O, take heed of this!

1. Shall I forsake the Lord, that has done these great things for my soul?

2. Shall I now do it after I am so near heaven?

3. Shall I forsake him when he departs from me but for a time, it may be, when he has followed me when I departed long from him?

4. Is it not hell to die without him? And shall it not be death to live without him?

5. Does he depart without a cause? He has no cause to follow me; I have all reason to follow him. The Lord grant you may do so.

Secondly. Secret defilement is by neglect of private communion with him; this is whorish in a wife. Here is stronger temptation to neglect private prayer and meditation, partly by want of room, partly by multitudes of businesses, and work, and cares hereabout, that being weary in the day, sleepy at night, busy in the morning, prayer, meditation, daily examination are sent away as Paul from Felix; we will speak with these at some more convenient season; and hence straitness of heart toward Christ, and no means to do good. O beloved, have you such a husband as Christ in heaven, that loves thy looks, thy company, thy sighs, thy speeches, and will you neglect him thus? What! no love? 2. Is he not broken with this whorish heart? 3. Is that speech worth any thing with you, "We shall ever be with the Lord"? Doth it comfort you to think of being ever with him, and now neglect him? Where are your hearts?

Thirdly. Secret defilement is by bringing other lovers into the same bed, the same heart with him; and here the temptation to this is strong; for most men have lost and sunk in their estates, and it is hard to live lower than we did, and this is a grief, and here grief for loss has a vent by greediness and pursuit after more. In other places, men had a very comfortable estate; hence rejoiced in what they had, and did not greedily desire more; but now want makes men hungry and greedy; and now, when a man has thought and looked about him, and seen what he may gain by his labor of many acres, by his goats and cattle,

in so many years — now he casts himself into the world, and also will not forsake Christ utterly, but bring both into the same heart. Christ shall have some love, some desire, but the world as much, and so the heart is divided; and hence some set high prices on their corn, commodities, cattle; others look for large wages, etc., and yet Christ too. Hence men cry out of the world because it hinders them from Christ, and yet bring it into and hug it in their hearts, because they must have it in the bed with Christ. It was the speech of one, that he never heard of any saint in Scripture given to covetousness; some to one sin, some to another, but none to that. I have heard of Lot; but God fired him out of his estate at last, and that is all I would say to this.

Fourthly. Secret defilement is by decaying in love to those whom Christ loves, and those are his saints, and temptation is strong in this place to this: 1. Because we have multitudes of them; even gold itself being so common as to pave our streets is despised. 2. Because there wants a common enemy to drive them together. Take several men that never knew one another; yet in time of war they will love abundantly, and then encourage one another, and can with joy lie together; so it is here. Hence arise your petty duels and jars in churches, surmisings, censurings, etc.; and the reason is this: there is little love to saints, and for want of this, men shall not know whether you be Christ's disciples or no. Be thy brethren saints or not? Bear they the image of Christ or no? If they do not, why not convince them, admonish them? And if they will not be better, away with them. If they be, O bear, O love, O tender them, as thou lookest the Lord Jesus should tender thee. And, therefore, let the image of Christ appear, and then see it, and then love, and then no more breaches will follow. If not, the Lord can and will soon send wolves to make sheep run more together.

Fifthly. Letting a new generation of harlots into Christ's bosom. I mean not greatly caring for posterity, that they may know and serve this God, for after this generation is past, our children are to follow, and it is very rare that they prove right, yet it may be so. Hearken, therefore, you parents; if God brought you over for this end, and if they never knew God, what a sad thing it would be! or if they be brought forth to pull down the temple of God! O, therefore, 1. Be careful of a pious education of them in schools, in private, and take some course for that end before others come over; this will draw them. 2. O, make many prayers for them. 3. Set faith awork in God's promise; as he said he would not abate the Lord

(though he gave it him in ninety-nine) of that one. Leave in record what the Lord has done for you, that the Lord may be with them, and that all these churches may be the glory of Christ, and then you shall enter into the bride chamber of the Lamb at last.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHRISTIAN'S DUTY OF BEING CONSTANTLY AND CONTINUALLY READY TO MEET CHRIST, AND TO ENJOY COMMUNION WITH HIM.

SECTION I.

2. "*Took their Lamps.*"

MUCH dust is raised and much dispute is made, especially by Popish interpreters, what the lamps, what the oil, what the vessels should be. The general conceit of most of them is, that by oil is meant good works, and by lamps faith, answerable to their own conceit, that not faith but good works chiefly save; whereas, if we consider the thing rather *e contra*, that by lighted lamps are meant good works or eternal shining profession, according to that of Christ, (Matt. v.,) "Let your light so shine before men," etc.; and that by oil should be meant faith, because it is inward, and is the nourishment of works and outward profession. And in this sense some of our divines do take this Scripture, and the Rhemists likewise, who understand by lamps lighted, good works; by oil, a good intention. To which it is answered, (by Cartwright, that burning and shining light of our times,) that rather by lamps lighted is to be understood "watchful minds, always lifted up in attending for the coming of Christ," according as it is verse 13. And I doubt not but this is one thing aimed at, that they "took their lamps;" i. e., were watchful for Christ's coming. But when I weigh other circumstances, methinks there is somewhat else more plainly and principally intended, of which I scarce read any divine, but he gives a hint of — viz., that by lighted lamps and taking of them is meant nothing else but the readiness of the churches to meet and to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus. And my reasons are these: —

Because the Lord Jesus, to teach his people watchfulness, and to put them to a narrow search of themselves, borrows a similitude from the custom of those times wherein their marriages

were celebrated in the night; and hence the virgins, (the only children of the bride chamber, and some think their number never exceeded ten,) being to walk out in the night, took their lamps; and when they had kindled their lamps, (usually the last thing that is done,) now they are ready to go out; and this is that which Christ aims at.

2. Luke xii. 35, "Let your loins be girt and lamps burning." It is evident that thereby is meant nothing else but readiness to meet the Lord whenever he comes; for when loins are girt, then one is fit for travel; but seeing it is in the night, hence, lamps must be burning too.

3. Because it is said plainly, (verse 10,) when their lamps were kindled again, "They that were ready went in." I know the word is called a lamp for our feet, (Ps. cxix.;) and so by lamps may be meant minds enlightened and kindled by the word. The eminent profession and excellences of the church is like a lamp, (Is. lxii. 1,) and more particularly may be here included and aimed at; but, in this verse, lamps are spoken of in general, including light, oil, vessels; and hence I give this general interpretation here, intending particulars, if need be, afterward; so that now shall only raise this point.

Section II.

Doct. That all those that are espoused unto Christ ought to be in a constant and continual readiness to meet Christ, and to have immediate communion with Christ.

A woman may be espoused to another, and yet she may be sometimes not ready to meet him; her foul apparel is on. So here, therefore, it is not enough to be espoused unto Christ, but, being espoused, now you ought to be in a continual readiness to clasp the Lord in your arms, and to lay your heads in his bosom in heaven. This is commanded by Christ. Matt. xxiv. 44. This was the mighty power of God's grace in Paul, when others were weeping to think of his bonds — "Why do you break my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for Christ;" and so, doubtless, to be with Christ; much more ready to meet Christ whenever he shall come — ready to welcome death — much more ready to welcome Christ. Acts xxi. 13. This also is the end of John's ministry. Luke i. 17. To make ready a people prepared for the Lord; to meet with Christ on earth. Now he is gone, our work is to prepare a people to meet the Lord in heaven. Hence this is put in as the difference between vessels of wrath and vessels of glory. The one are fitted for

destruction, the others are fitted, prepared, or made ready for glory; and the glory of a Christian is chiefly to enjoy fellowship immediately with Jesus Christ. There is many a soul dear unto Christ, and espoused to him, and has his heart affected to think of the good time that is coming, when we shall ever be with the Lord; but ask, Are you ready yet for to go to him, though it be through fires, waters, thorns, sorrows, death itself? Who can say yes? But (say men's hearts) shut the Lord out a little longer, let not the door stand open yet; yet this must be. And, therefore, for explication's sake, let me, 1. Show you when the soul is in readiness for the Lord Jesus. 2. The reasons why there must be a continual readiness.

Section III.

Quest. When is the soul in readiness to enjoy Christ?

Ans. As there are four things which make a Christian unready, so this readiness consists in four things contrary.

1. That which makes a Christian unready for him are those strong fears and jealousies, and damping doubts of the love of Christ to him. The soul happily has made choice of him, is content with him, melts into wonderment and love to think that he should love him. What, me? And has Christ writ him on his heart and on the palms of his hands? "But Israel saith, My God hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me." Is. xlix. 14. Is it possible? Is it credible? One that has been so vile, one that still has such a heart, for him to set his heart on me? Surely no. Hence the soul is afraid to die, and desires too much to live still; and the more he thinks of that time, and blessedness of following the Lamb wherever he goes, the more he fears and sees this may possibly never be my portion. There may be some falseness in my heart toward him that I never yet saw; some secret knot that was never yet unloosed, and hence not yet ready. Hence many a Christian saith, If I had a little more assurance, let him come when he will. Thus, some think, it was with Hezekiah, who, though he walked before God with a "perfect heart," yet bitterly complained that he was cut off. Is. xxxviii. *per totum.* So therefore, then, the soul is ready and prepared for him, when he has some comfortable assurance of the love of Christ toward him, that it can say, If I live, he loves me; though he kills me by death, yet I know that he loves me; nay, then, he loves me most when he puts an end to my sins, and to my sorrows too. And therefore now saith, as one ready to receive a prince, Now let him come to me, or

send for me when he will. Why so? "Who can separate me from the love of Christ?" Rom. viii. 35. That look as it is with a soldier that is to go to war, where many bullets and arrows are like to fall about him, and him while he has no armor on; call him to the captain, and he will say he is not ready yet; but when he has his armor on of proof, and such armor that he knows, let him receive never so many wounds, yet he shall escape with his life, and triumph with his captain afterward. Now, give him but his watchword, he is ready; though never so weak, yet I am sure I shall escape with my life, nay, not so much as hurt. So a Christian wanting his assurance wants his armor; he is weak, and powers of darkness will assault him, and he is slain by them now he is unready; but if assured, though weak and feeble, he is now at Christ's watchword; I know I shall live; I may fall, but I shall rise again; this puts courage and spirit into a Christian. Dan. iii. 17, 18; Heb. xi. 35. Others were tormented, (and so ready,) "not accepting deliverance." Why so? To "obtain a better resurrection," which they are said to see by the eye of faith. And this was by poor, weak women. Therefore labor for this, else not prepared. The Lord would have his people look death and dangers in the face, and triumph in sorrows, and not faint-hearted, (which can not be done without this,) that the world may see that there is more than men in them. 2 Cor. iv. 16–18, and v. 1. Who would be without this? Yet may we not complain, as Christ of his disciples, "O foolish and slow of heart to believe all that is written," so many promises yet not assured, so many experiences yet not established, and therefore not yet prepared and ready for the coming of the Lord? A man that has a fair estate and house befallen him, so long as he is in suit for it, dares not dwell in it, but makes a shift where he is; but then he is ready when quiet possession is given him. So get the Lord to pass sentence for assurance of your everlasting habitation, then are you ready to dwell therein.

2. Then a man is unprepared for the Lord Jesus his coming, while he wants affections suitable to the majesty, and according to the worth and love of the Lord Jesus. Suppose a woman knows her husband's love; yet if she have lost her love to him, or if she love him, it is only as she loves another man, not according to the worth of her husband's person, or the greatness of his love. Is she fit now to appear before him, when no heart to receive him? So, although you question not Christ's love to you, and thank God you doubt little of it, yet where is your heart? your love to him? Have you not lost your love, your first love,

or second love? If you have love, is it not divided to other things, as wife, child, friends, hopes of provision for them, and too much care hereupon for that? Or if you do love him, it is with a carnal love; he is no more than a lust hath had, and it may be not so much; it is with a cold love; now you are unfit for him: hence the Lord, (Luke xxi. 34,) "Take heed your hearts be not overcharged." 1 Pet. iv. 7. Now, therefore, then, the soul is prepared to meet Christ, when, if the soul has lost its affections, it recovers them out of the hands of all creatures that stole them away from Christ; and hence David prays, "O, spare, that I may recover my strength:" and when it breaks out with such love to Christ as is fitting for him, (2 Tim. iv. 8,) there is the righteous Judge ready to give the crown, when Christ's appearing is loved; i. e., they are so taken with him, as that they love the looks of him, it would rejoice my heart to see, which shall make others tremble to behold him. O, it must be a dear love, a spring of running love without measure, for this is the difference between affections of saints and hypocrites to Christ — the one arises like a morning dew, which is soon licked up by the sun, (Hos. vi. 4;) the heat of affections after other things licks it up! But the love of saints to Christ is like a spring which rises to everlasting life; a spring is but little, but yet the farther it goes, the wider it is, till at last swallowed up in the sea, and there is no measure of water: so saints have but a little love, but the longer they live, the more enlarged for Christ, and there is no measure, but all is too little; they never can, never do love enough; so that look, as it is said in another case, (Ps. cii. 13, 14,) "It is time for thee to build up Jerusalem," i. e., to return to thy people in thy ordinances, for "they love the stones;" so then it is time for Christ to come, and then the fit and set time is come for a people to meet with Christ out of ordinances, when the set time is come when they love ordinances, and love Christ much more. When a man is gone beyond sea, and all his friends and estate are at home, they long for him, and he is left among enemies: why comes he not to them? why send they not for him? Why, they know he is sickly, and can not live on the diet of the country; hence he is unfit to come; but when once that is come to pass, that he can live only on it, then he is ready whenever they send. So when men can live with, and be content alone with Christ and his love, now they are fit. With what face can a man appear before Christ when he requires nothing but love, and he has not that?

3. Then a man is unready for Christ while he neglects the work of Christ; for suppose a man has some inward love to

Christ, yet neglects and has no heart to do the work of Christ; he is as yet no more fit to meet Christ than a steward who has had much betrusted him, to improve for his lord's use, and he has let all seasons go wherein he might have traded for him, and gained somewhat to him. How can he appear before him when no fair account is to be seen? So the Lord has betrusted thee with many talents, times, strength, means, etc., and you are not lords, but stewards of all these. Now, do you not let many fair seasons and winds blow by? You have (if espoused to Christ) every man some work. Now, how can you stand before Christ if that be neglected? O, thus it is with many Christians; hence those sad alarms of conscience, and shaking of God's Spirit, after many loose days dipped in some good duties. What dost thou that others do not that never shall see God's face in heaven?

Now, therefore, then the soul is ready for the Lord, when it is daily at it, finishing God's work: hence, (John xvii. 5,) "I have finished my work; now glorify me." Christ has given us our lives' work, day's work, every hour's work; for Christ has ever employment: now, though a soul may live long, and can not finish its life's work, yet if it finish its day's work, or hour's work, it may have comfort then if the Lord should come. That, look, as it is with a mariner when he has his freight; now let the wind come to drive him out of the haven, he is ready to depart: so here, (2 Pet. i. 8–11,) "If ye do these things and abound, an open entrance shall be ministered unto you;" i. e., when a Christian is ever acting for Christ, and adding one grace to another in his course, then he is so ready that an open entrance is made for him: therefore look after this. It is with most professors, commonly, as it is with a woman that loves her husband, and begins to dress herself, but so much business to do, that she doth it but by starts; hence, call her never so late, she will say she is not yet ready, she has so much to do she can not: so it is here. Or as it is in a house where all things are in a lumber, and many things wrapped up and put into holes; so long as all things be in a lumber, there is no readiness. So many a soul has a heart fit to receive Christ, but all things are in a lumber, in a confusion, out of place and order, and hence not yet ready to entertain Christ; but when this work is done, then ready. O, betimes, do this work; set things to right in your souls.

4. Then a man is unready, when, having done his work, he grows puffed up with it; for let all the three former be wrought in the soul, if now the soul be puffed up, thinks highly of itself, attributes any thing to itself; as he said in another case, "They

are too many for the Lord;" so he is too big for the Lord. And truly this we shall find, it is pretty easy to be mean in our own eyes, after we have been indeed careless and vile before the Lord; but when the Lord has mightily assisted, enlarged, assured, enabled, comforted, quickened, now to be as nothing, this is difficult. Hence Knox on his death bed had this temptation of meriting. When Hezekiah was sick, he was cast down; but when well, and God gave him great treasures, his heart was lifted up; now he was unfit. Now, therefore, when a Christian is ready to give all to free grace, and to adore that, now is he ready for the Lord. Ps. cviii. 1, "My heart is prepared, I will sing and give praise." God's last end is to bring the soul to the praise of the riches of his grace, not only to enjoy God as Adam. Now, the great reason why Christ comes not to his people presently after they are espoused to him, it is to make them ready to attain that end. Hence he leaves sin, temptations, sorrows, desertions, on purpose that they may at conclusion look back and see, if ever saved, pardoned, it is grace. Now, therefore, when the soul is brought to do this, when he has this rent in his hand, now the Lord is ready to receive him and it too, and he is prepared for the Lord. He that has not his rent ready, himself is not as yet at all ready to meet with and see his landlord. So that you think you boast not, O, the Lord sees you do, or have not hearts so enlarged toward grace as you should, it is certain you are yet unready then; but when empty, and poor, and cast down, and makest an infinite matter of a small sin, and settest a high price on a little love, much more on infinite, now you are prepared; hence David falls a praising when near to death, and the Lord near to come to him.

Section IV.

Reason 1. The law of respect and love requires this of us. When Peter would express his love unto Christ, (Luke xxii. 33,) he professes he was "not only ready to go to prison, but to die with him." Christ has poor respect and love, if men will not so much as be always ready to receive him. It certainly argues a careless heart that slights Christ, that is not ever prepared to receive Christ.

2. Because the time of Christ's coming is then when we least look for him. Verse 13. Hence a Christian ought to be ever ready to receive him. Many of eminent parts, when the church had most need of them, then are cut down. Many at their first conversion, before they or others almost could tell what to make

of them, the Lord hath cropped them in the bud. Men find their hearts unfit and unready; they think hereupon that hereafter they shall get their hearts into better order and tune when these businesses are over, but yet will live at liberty a little while. Why, then, it is most likely is the Lord's time of coming, even now, when they think least of it. Luke xii. 40.

3. Because the Lord has set apart every one that is espoused to the Lord Jesus, only for the fruition of Christ, and use of Christ. 1 Cor. iii. *ult.*, "You are Christ's, and Christ is God's." A woman that is not chosen, nor set apart for the fellowship of a prince, she may go how she will, and do what she will, any base drudgery work; but she that is chosen to be next unto him, and only to behold and love him, she is not to plead she has so much business to do, and so many friends to speak with, that she can not make herself ready; she is set apart for a better person, and for more noble employment. So here, men of the world, not loved of God, nor chosen and set apart for him, may do what they will; but when the Lord has chosen and set you apart of purpose for this end. Ephes. i. 4, "Chosen to be holy before him in love;" i. e., to stand ever in his presence before him, with a spirit of dearest love unto him. Hence the Lord has taken the care of all things else, (1 Pet. v. 7,) that we might mind and do this thing; if in danger, he will deliver; if in want, he will provide; if weak, he will strengthen; only now be ready for the Lord. Ps. xlv. 10, "Forget thy country and thy father's house, so shall the Lord desire thy beauty." You are not now free to love and follow whom you please; the Lord has bound you to himself by love, and you have bound yourself by promise to the Lord again. Therefore now a Christian, after once espoused to Christ, is better than all the world, being the bride of the Lamb; and he has a better and greater good for to enjoy; therefore he should scorn and abhor to match himself to, or to do any thing for any other creature, and there methinks should sit as one upon a watchtower, looking out, and telling the clock now day is near, waiting only for Christ. O, let it be so! If in heaven you shall have only Christ, O, prepare for him much more now! As a woman that is matched to a rich man, all the servants attend on her, and follow her, she is wholly and only for her husband; so it should be here.

4. Because he has prepared and made all things else ready for the soul, it is hard if he has prepared a place in heaven, and grace in heaven, not to prepare a heart, and make it ready for him. John xiv. 1–3. His kingdom was ready long ago, and his Father ready to accept and entertain thee, and his heart loves

and desires, all are ready after thee; hence be ready to meet with him. "I am my Beloved's."

Section V.

Use 1. Hence see the great unkindness of many a soul immediately after his espousing to Jesus Christ, who, having once given himself to Christ, and received comfort thereby, presently grows more careless than before he was matched unto the Lord Jesus, who should now stand in a holy watchfulness and readiness to receive Christ, as it is in Ps. lxxxv. 8, "Let them not turn again to folly," because they are apt so to do. Many say when in some distress, and after long waiting, If the Lord would pity once, then happy I; I would give away any thing, all I have, unto him. Well, the Lord pities the soul when in its low estate, and then it blesses God; but, like the Israelites, soon forgets his works, his love, and, after great peace from God, comes greatest carelessness. Can this stand with grace and Christ? Very hardly; but yet it may, for there are two things that make for it.

1. Because at first conversion there is much seeking of Christ for healing the horror and smart of sin, as well as for the curing of the wound and scar of sin; hence, when espoused, and horror being past, that wheel being broken, a man draws more heavily now, and neglects seeking; now the knife is out of his heart, he cries not so earnestly.

2. Because when espoused and much affected, commonly a man trusts to his affections when he has a fullness of them; hence the Lord lets Satan prevail. Luke xxii. 31, 32, "Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat;" and "I (saith Peter) am ready to die with thee;" but you see he fell, and then, when the Lord looked upon him, he "went out and wept bitterly." How shamefully hast thou fallen! Should any love him more than you, if ever he pity? Well, for his name's sake, he has done it. But how oft hast thou broken covenant! How forgetful of the Lord's kindness! The Lord looks upon thee this day; why hast thou so soon forgot me and forsaken me? Have I not taken thee from the dunghill, nay, from hell? And whereas I had so many thousands to set my love on, I chose thee; and whereas thou couldst not love me when I offered myself, thou couldst not return me love again; I gave it therefore to thee, yea, and have given myself to thee forever. Hast thou thus forgotten me, when as I take little wrongs from thee more heavily than great ones from others? O that this might make you go out and mourn bitterly! So if ever you have tasted that love, as Peter did, Christ's looks will humble you.

Use 2. Hence see the reason why some godly people die so uncomfortably, and with such distress of spirit; why, they have not lived in an expectation of Christ, and hence they cry out themselves, not knowing whither they go, insomuch as some have not been comforted by all former experiences, and by all present consolations of ministers. O, no; it is now too late to speak; they thank them for their love, but God has otherwise thought of them; yet if any hope be given them, it is ever picked out from some word, and they cry, O, I thirst for a little mercy, and then die! and what is the reason of it? What need I speak? Themselves will tell you, and have done it — O, I have lived thus and thus before you, but my heart in secret has gone after the world, etc.; I have neglected the Lord secretly, I have seldom thought of or prepared for death, and I had thought to have been better, but the Lord has met with me. I know violence of disease may do it sometime, but I speak how it is many times; whereas otherwise an open entrance should be made. 2 Pet. i. 8–11. And as it has been with some, so take warning lest it be so with you; you may be saved alive, yet to suffer wreck on the shore is uncomfortable; and know it, if your conscience be awake, it can not but be so. Therefore do not conclude they were damned without Christ, but they were not made ready for Christ; and it may be your time draws nigh, and what have you to say? Now a world for half an hour, will a dying, distressed man say.

Use 3. Is of a fourfold exhortation, to all those especially that the Lord has espoused to himself.

CHAPTER IX.

A FOURFOLD EXHORTATION TO BELIEVERS.

Section I.

Exhort. 1. To quicken up all those doubting, drooping, yet sincere hearts that much question the love of Christ to them, now to use all diligence to make their calling, and election, and the love of Christ sure to them; not but that it is sure on Christ's part; but make it sure on your part too, else how can you be in a readiness to meet the Lord Jesus? While the strong man keeps the palace, the goods be in peace; but when Christ hath once driven Satan out of his throne, then nothing sometimes but

war, but doubts and fears. Satan told God to his face, Job served him for nought, much more the soul itself; and some divines think the very first ingredient of Satan's poison, and the first assault on Christ himself, (Matt. iv.,) was by seeking to make him doubt of his Sonship. "If thou be the Son of God," etc. And his wiles are here very great, that hence very few living Christians have any settled comfortable evidence of God's eternal love to them in his Son, and hence many sad events follow. How can any bless the Lord for that love which he knows not of? Many times it is with a man's doubts drooping from his mind, as it is with his continual dropping on his lungs, there is a daily consuming of what once was, that many a Christian doubts away his life, his heart, his strength, and when all is wasted, glad now to return to that where he should at first have begun. And hence, in one word, he is made every day unready for Christ. O, therefore, quiet not yourselves in that estate, as I fear too many do, (at least for a time;) it is one of the most dangerous estates that can be, to be troubled with weak fears, and yet rest in uncertain hopes. But bring it to a conclusion. Is the Lord Jesus mine or no? And if he be yours, and his love yours, see it, that you may trample on the neck of death, and triumph over hell and the grave, and long to be with the Lord, and love the appearing of the Lord, and go away with joy unspeakable and full of glory out of this world, as to your wedding; and if there be any hope of getting it, who would be without it? Some of you, it may be, have a long time been careless in seeking for it, hence want it; some of you have been traders with the Lord long, and yet doubt; some of you have not clear evidence, but content yourselves without being thankful to the Lord for what he hath done for you, hence still doubt. Others have gray hairs on your heads, or at least are near your graves, the battle is near, your armor is not on, you are not yet ready, and so still doubt. I remember what Christ said of Mary's box — "She prepared that for his burial." It may be that these truths may be prepared for your approaching departure; and therefore light your lamps at this fire and light of the Lord's love to you, and see that indeed he loves thee.

Object. But why do you persuade to this, till the Spirit comes and speaks it? How can I see it?

Ans. 1. It is true the Spirit only can do it; but yet the same Spirit that seals the elect, the same Spirit commands the elect not to sit idle and dream of the Spirit, but to use all diligence to make it sure; and you shall never have it (unless you lay hold on a fancy for it) on those terms.

2. Though there is an immediate witness of the Spirit of the love of Christ, yet it doth most usually and firstly witness by means. And hence I shall give you means, looking only to the Spirit of Christ to set them on. Evangelical precepts have a power; for gospel ministration of the Spirit consists not only of stories and promises, but commands, and the elect feel them. Hence carnal men under the law, yet pretending gospel, will profess the law is preached when to any evangelical duty, because they feel not the power of the gospel, being not yet under it. And the means I shall mention are only general, to establish the hearts of some.

Means 1. Make a sad inquiry first of this, whether the Lord hath loved thee for his own everlasting name's sake or no; for if the Lord hath loved thee for this cause, then thy great objection will be answered, and that deep valley will be filled. How can the Lord love me that am thus vile before God, and fallen from God? Why, if the Lord, for his own sake, hath loved thee, then, as no good in thee moved him to love thee, so no sin which he did know was and would be in thee can quench that love; and if he hath manifested his love to be grounded on this, though but once, that same night when thou changest is not changed, but is still as dear to him, and ever before him to move him to love thee still. Rom. xi. 2. The apostle answers a cavil, "Will God cast away his people?" No, saith he; none that he foreknew. And who are these? Verse 5, "A remnant according to grace as with us;" i. e., God hath, for his grace's sake, chosen and called, without respect of any thing else. Hence that is to be understood. 1 Sam. xii. 21, 22. For there are two sorts of people in the church: 1. Servants; 2. Sons. John viii. 35. Hence there is a double love the Lord manifests to men.

1. Some he loves as servants, that as we hire some men to do our work, and give them meat and wages, and then turn them out of doors, or let them go; so God hath work to be done for his sons and saints, and (for many reasons) hires wicked men to it, either by giving them reward in this life, or hopes of reward hereafter, and when the work is done, and use made of their gifts, graces, spirits, then turns them out of doors. But, —

2. Some he loves as sons, even the most foolish and weak in the world sometimes. Hence not for any service they can do, but for his own sake he will give them an inheritance, and love them as sons, because he will; these abide ever in the Lord's love. Hagar and Ishmael cast out, Sarah and Isaac stay in the family.

Quest. How shall I know that?

Ans. 1. If the Lord loves thee for his name's sake, it will draw thee to that fellowship with itself, that whatever thou wantest thou wilt seek for it hence, by presenting that name of God, that for his own sake he would supply. I know the Lord loves for Christ's sake; but why should Christ help for his name's sake? For thus many hypocrites think, when they see God's anger against them for their sin, they seek to remove sin, and when that is done, think God is at peace, and now all is well. They see the Lord is delighted with the obedience of his people; hence fall to that work, and now think the Lord is pleased with them. But if ever the Lord loves any man, he will first stop his mouth, whether Jew or Gentile, (Rom. iii. 19,) and make him, on his knees, know there is no reason for it, nay, all reason against it. Now, has not the Lord brought thee to this? And hence, having nothing to quench God's anger but Christ, hast held up him before God; and having nothing to move Christ, hast held up his name before him, and here hast rested thy wearied heart looking to him, if any grace be begun in thee, that he would perfect it; if none, that he would begin it; if unfit and unworthy, to prepare thee for it, only for his own good pleasure. This is one evidence of it. As it is in some seals, you can hardly perceive in the seal what is engraven there, but set it on wax, you may see it evidently. So here, hardly can you see the Lord's love for his own sake; if thou cleavest with dearest affection to this love for its own sake, there thou art safe. Prov. xviii. 10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower," etc.; and this is not only at first conversion, but ever after all duties, all enlargements. Ezek. xvi. *ult.* And this does evidence love.

1. Because, if thou hadst the righteousness of angels, thou wouldst think it a good evidence; but this of Christ is a thousand times dearer.

2. This is a setting of God against himself, i. e., to answer himself; and hence saints, in all their straits and sorrows, hither had recourse. I speak not now of temporal blessings, but of everlasting love, and all the fruits of it, that here it hangs. Now, I say, you are built in a rock higher than all powers of darkness; now a key is put into thy hand to unlock all God's treasure; now thou art in the very lap of love, wrapped up in it, when here thy heart rests; and therefore, if this be thus, see it, and wonder his name has moved him to love me.

3. You shall find this, if the Lord for his name's sake loves thee, there is not any carriage or passage of providence of him to thee, but he gets himself a name first or last by it; for if this be God's

end, every passage of providence is but a means to this end. Hence he will attain this end by every act of his providence toward thee. Hence you shall find that those very sins that dishonor his name, he will even by them (and if by them, by all things else) get himself a name; he will be so far from casting thee out of his love, that he will do thee good by them. Those very sins that God damns others for, he will make to humble thee, empty thee. Pharisees persecuted Christ, and lost all for it; Paul was so, and it humbled him all his life — "Not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God;" and it made him lay up all his wealth in mercy — "I was received to mercy." 1 Tim. i. Mary sins much, and God forgives much, and she loves much; others sinned much, and God hardened much. Judas betrays Christ and repents, and hangs himself, and flies from him; Peter denies him and weeps, and hence he is the first that preaches him. And this is certain, in the best hypocrite, sins left in him either never make him better, but blind and harden him, and he has his distinctions of infirmity, etc., that he slights them day by day, till all his days are run out; or if any good, it is no more than Judas or Cain, some legal terrors, or other light flashes of comfort; but to be more humble indeed, etc., this he finds not. Now, is it not so with thee? Doth not thy weakness strengthen thee, with Paul? Doth not thy blindness make thee cry for light? And those cries have been heard; out of darkness God has brought light. Thou hast felt venom and risings of heart against Christ; and do they not make thee loathe thyself more, that thou thinkest never any so beholding to grace? Do not thy falls into sin make thee more weary of it, watchful against it, long to be rid of it? And so sin abounds, but grace abounds. Why should this be so? For his name's sake, because he will love thee; hence it is so great and unmatchable, that he will make thy poison thy food, thy death thy life, thy damnation salvation, thy very greatest enemies thy greatest friends. And hence Mr. Fox said he thanked God for his sins more than his good works. I have marveled at God's dealings with his people; they depart, and stay long, and care not for returning again; in that time a mighty power teaches, humbles, brings back, when they never thought of it. O, the reason is, God will have his name. Now, if thus, your assurance will be strong and constant; but, if you build thus, I have done this, etc., I have that, your assurance will not stand; therefore look and see if it be not thus with you.

Means 2. Take heed you do not build your assurance from a mingled covenant of works and grace, for this is the frame of

divers when they lie under the first covenant only of doing, they will not take this as any evidence, as they have no reason so to do. Rom. ix. 31. Nor, when a man lies under the second covenant of believing barely, and if it be a dead faith, they have no evidence or reason so to do. Hence they mingle the covenants, and think thus, If I can believe in Christ, and perform universal obedience to all the commands of God, I shall be safe; hence set upon the observance of both, and finding they can never do them, especially the latter, hence are ever troubled, and never have any settled peace. Hence those Galatians Paul writes to, perverting and mingling the covenants, were troubled. Gal. i. 7, and v. 12. Not (beloved) but that whoever believes and performs universal obedience evangelically to the whole law, he can not but do well; and he that does it not, but lives in any one sin, let him evidence his faith if he can. But I speak when a man submits to it, *sub forma fœderis*, if I can do it, and because I can not do it, hence doubt. Hence gather your evidence of God's love primarily and chiefly from your subjection to the second covenant. Gal. vi. 16, "Peace on them that walk according to this rule;" for Adam's righteousness that did tie him to God, it brake; hence no life, nor evidence from that; but faith is an everlasting, invincible grace, upheld by the mighty power of God, and hence here will be everlasting evidence and peace. 1 Pet. i. 8, "Whom though we see not, yet believing we rejoice." *Object.* Is a Christian then free from the law? *Ans.* Yes, he is free from it as a covenant; hence, though it be broken by him, he is not cast out of covenant or favor; but he is not free from it as a rule, from which if he swerves, he is to call himself, not God's love, into question. Why? Because it has pleased the Father in another covenant to offer life, give life, and hence only to evidence life. Whatever the law requires I have; at that instant I did believe I performed it in a Saviour by faith; and that I myself may do every tittle of it, I come into a Saviour for it by faith; so that when Satan objects you have no Christ, nor love of a Christ, because no faith, and no faith because you can not do this or that, answer, I can not do it, indeed I never undertook it to have life or love thus; but I have done it in another, and I can do all things by Christ, if he will help me, under whose grace I lie, and hence will be so far from doubting, that I will rejoice in mine infirmities, that I am a fit subject for the power and grace of Christ to show itself upon. Thus retire to the second covenant ever, if ever you would get any settled peace. And from neglect of this flows a world of unpeaceableness in many a spirit, ever complaining, and why? I can not

do this or that, never peace now; but can not you lie under the Lord that he would help? Keep here, and keep your peace here.

Object. But many a Christian that retires hither hath no peace; and so have I done, yet find none.

Ans. It is then upon a double ground which you are to avoid; either, 1. Because you have faith, but you imprison your faith, you put out the eyes and shackle the feet of faith; for faith will conquer and triumph over all sins and fears of the world, if at liberty, (1 John v. 4;) like a master in a ship, if he can not save the ship one way, let him have liberty, he will by another. If it be objected, you have departed from Christ, what have you to do with him? I'll return, saith faith, to my first husband. *Object.* But he is angry with you. *Ans.* If he be angry for my departure from him, I will not provoke him more by staying here; who knows but he may repent? *Object.* But you can not go to him with all your heart. *Ans.* True; yet I'll look to him to draw me. *Object.* But you feel nothing. *Ans.* Yet I will wait. *Object.* But you will wait in vain. *Ans.* Still I will look he would keep me from that. Now, stop at any of these, trouble comes; suffer it to shift, it will find rest. As it is with the anchor, let it down but little, the ship drives; but let it down at full length, it will ride in storms; then it is wrestling of faith that gets the blessing, where opposition makes the soul take faster hold, as it was with Jacob. The woman of Canaan got it thus.

Or, 2. It is because they look for another kind of faith, and hence own not, as the Jews the Messiah; they made account to have received him in state, and he came low; so men look for a superlative faith, but want it. But thus the soul espoused to Christ, so long as marriage covenant lasts, she may conclude of love.

Means 3. Do not fear the love of Christ is not toward you, because he hides his face, and departs sometimes from you; husbands remain so when they depart, and leave the house for many a day; and it is simple to say he is not my husband now. So here the Lord loves his people, yet departs, (Is. liv. 1–7;) and truly it is very hard when inward blows, and sad desertions, and outward miseries, and no Christ found, though sought for. But how shall I then know and discern his love? *Ans.* Many things might be said this way, only one thing observe, whether thy love remains still to him for himself; for it is a rule that most commonly a Christian's purest and dearest love appears in Christ's absence from him. As it is with friends, while with us we love them; but when gone, we feel that love more quick than

before. Jerusalem lies in the dust, and now the very dust is beloved, (Ps. cii. 13, 14;) and if it be so, it is certain we love him because he loved us, and we continue to love him because he continues to love us; now look, then, if thy love do not appear, 1. In mourning for his absence; 2. In longing for his presence; 3. In blessing him for a little that is left of himself, as seeing such want of him; and is not this for himself, to have his company again, that though God gives thee all other things, yet when thou comest to consider the Lord is gone, this strikes near, as when Christ departed away? John xvi. 5, 6. But because love may be benumbed and lie dead, therefore try it a time of parting, and put thy heart thus to it; if he be none of thine, then take thy fill in thy sin, and forsake him. No, beloved, here you shall see the heart will yield and melt, (John xiii. 3–6, etc.;) and it will say, Lord, let me never sin more against thee, though never saved by thee. And take it for a rule, do not think the Lord has left off his love to you when you depart from him, and he from you; but, lying in your departures, O, that is sad! but, return again, it comforts the Lord's heart, especially when it is for himself, not for peace and salvation, but, though he never saves me, O, yet I will look after him.

Means 4. Look to the tender-heartedness of the Lord Jesus; for (beloved) all the doubts of Christians arise chiefly from this head, from a hard opinion of Christ, which Satan suggests, as at first, (Gen. iii. 5,) that so they might take in his wares. God's people do not know the tender-heartedness of the Lord Jesus; Satan presents him only in wrath. When any threats are spoken, all these are mine, saith the soul, etc. And now, if any woman lives with a man that is of a hoggish, churlish disposition, she will be ever doubting of his love. Men do not know it, I say, and hence, when any misery or trouble comes, they grow jealous of him, which the Lord takes exceeding ill. Deut. i. 27.

Quest. How shall I know that tender-heartedness of Christ?

Ans. By his carriage towards men when he was here on earth, for now he is in heaven in glory, and we know not what his disposition is; therefore his life on earth was the living looking-glass of his heart forever. In four things.

1. Never any came to him that he cast away, whatever their sorrows or sins were, but healed them every one, if they came to him with their miseries; for in healing their miseries he did but show his readiness to heal them of their sin; hence Matthew applies that, (Matt. viii. 17,) "He bare our infirmities."

2. When men came to him for by ends, not for himself chiefly, he rebukes them for it, and shows he was more ready to give himself than bread to them. John vi. 27.

3. Those that were lost, and sick, and miserable, and came not to him, he went up and down to seek and save them, the "lost sheep." Luke xix. 10.

4. Those that would none of his love, he pitied and had compassion on their misery and sin, as on them that were sheep without a shepherd; he mourned for the hardness of their hearts. He wept over Jerusalem. Now look upon Christ the same still. Thou comest to him in secret to take away all iniquity, to give thee himself: tell me, dost thou think the Lord, if here, would reject thee ever? 2. But I dare not receive him. *Ans.* Thou wilt take bread from him daily, and he is more willing to give himself. 3. Thou canst not come to him, nor find him, but only sometimes, nor see him. Well, but then he will seek thee out. 4. O, but I oft reject! Yet he pities thee still. O, think of this compassion of Christ, and make him as if present! It is a special means to establish the heart in believing.

Means 5. Learn to know, when you are bound, not to give way to your fear of God's love, for sometimes it is the case of many a precious soul, that he has clear evidence of God's love to him; and what is there against it? Nothing but a fear, what if I shall be deceived when all is done? And hence the heart sinks exceedingly. As some women that have special love, if once they take a jealousy of their husband, it is never removed. So here.

Quest. How shall I know this?

Ans. First. If those fears thou hast drive thee farther from Christ, it is clear you are then to cast them off. Those fears that cause sin are sinful; but to be driven from Christ is sinful. Luke v. 9, 10, "Lord, depart from me; I am sinful." "Fear not," saith Christ, (1 Sam. xii. 20;) they were ready to cast off all. "Fear not," saith he. Think of this, what it is you get by nursing up those fears; they hinder your joy in and your love to Christ; your blessing of Christ; cause a dead, discouraging heart. Nay, though they drive you to Christ one way, if they drive you from Christ another way, by questioning his care, concluding against his truth, never doubt they are vile. Matt. viii. 26, "Why did ye fear, O ye of little faith?" So far, therefore, as fear drives us to Christ, it is good, otherwise to be cut off.

2. If the Lord has drawn thy heart to come to Christ, and when undone, every way secretly persuaded thy heart that thou shalt have help if thou come, and by coming hast received healing virtues of thy lusts and vile affections from the Lord Jesus, fear not now; it is a sin to fear I shall not have help; as (Mark v. 33) the woman with the bloody issue, she was afraid she had

presumed, hence came trembling; but the Lord told her, "Now fear not; be it unto thee according to thy faith;" only thy issue is but begun to heal. What say you? Have you never come to him, never received any healing from him? That is hard. Surely it is so, that I would not be in my lust again for a world.

Means 6. If none of these prevail, but the Lord follows thee with fears on fears, as wave on wave, then see if there be not some guile of spirit in thee; i. e., some sin you have, or would give way to, if you had assurance of God's love. It was the speech of one to me, next to the donation of Christ no mercy like this, to deny assurance long; and why? for, if the Lord had not, I should have given way to a loose heart and life; but, etc.: so if the Lord should deal so with thee, it may be thou wouldst lie in thy sins, if thou hadst peace there; and it may be you have had it, but sinned, and not confessed, not lamented, not opposed. Thus it was with David. Ps. xxxii. 1–4. Hence when he confessed, the Lord forgave in his conscience his sin. Men will withdraw their love from their wives if it make them wanton, and deal sharply with them. So one that never restored could never get peace; some ever complaining, never settled, because they have their truces with sin, and would have peace with Christ, and it can not be. And this is a rule I have long held, in them that have clear light of the gospel, long denial of assurance is like fire to burn out some sin, and then the Lord will speak peace. Judg. x. 16. And therefore take this counsel, and God will tell thee thy sin, if thou art desirous that he should find it out, but get this mercy from him. Zach. xiii. 9.

Means 7. Bring thy heart to a strait, either to reject or receive him to be thine; he is offered to be King and Saviour, and lord and husband; now thou shalt have his heart, his hand, his Spirit, his Father, his kingdom, his ordinances, his angels, himself, if you receive him; or else, if not, you shall lose him; and then woe to thee, when any mercy, any misery, any ordinance befalls thee; for all shall suck thy blood, consume thee, and fit thee for eternal ruin; and then I wish, O that I had taken him! but then too late; therefore receive him or reject him. O, I can not; that's another matter. However, we propound these evangelical commands that may come with power, and therefore know, that if they do not now, they shall arise again in time.

Section II.

Exhort. 2. This is not all that which makes you ready for Christ, unless your love is set and fixed on him; and therefore

look that it be ready. I doubt not but that there is glowing in your hearts some love to the Lord; it can not be that all should be quenched, that all his kindness should be forgotten, but remembered many times with some affliction; but know it, if it be so, your lamp is not yet in your hand, nor your souls ready to meet the Lord. For look as it is with a mighty prince, that shall set his heart on some poor servant, and he requires no portion but to love him the more, and she can not bring her heart to love him more than other mean fellows, is she fit or ready to be matched unto him? So here. Hence, (Matt. x. 37,) "He that loves father or mother," etc.; then you are ready when your love is fit for such a husband; and therefore, though you feel some love under the ashes (when you stir up your hearts) to the Lord Jesus, yet if it be not a fit love beseeming his excellency and the glory of his person, when you can draw out buckets of love, and pour it upon other things, but scarce fetch out a drop for Christ, and yet you hope that will serve the turn; I tell you no, you are yet unfit and unready for him. Look as it was with their offering the testimonies of love and thankfulness, (Mal. i. 14;) so it is here. And therefore my exhortation shall be as is said in that psalm, (Ps. lxxxvi. 7, 8,) "Give unto the Lord the honor due unto his name." So give to the Lord the love that is due unto him, that love that is fit for him.

Quest. What is that love the Lord would have, which is fit for him?

Ans. 1. Beloved, I hope if you think not your blood too dear for Christ, you will not think any love too much for Christ. Yet because I would not have you aim at uncertain mark and shoot at a venture, I shall single out that love which I hope your own consciences can not but say is fit. And,—

1. I had thought to have sought for this from you, viz.: Give the Lord Jesus but that love, no more love than thou hast given to thy lusts, the Lord will be contented with it, (Rom. vi. 19,) "As ye have yielded," etc.; so now. But that it may be you may think this love too base for him, yet give him but this, and the Lord would be contented with it, and accept of it; and those that shall not, it shall be their torment in hell to think of this word. O that I had given the Lord Jesus that love I gave to my base lusts! I had had him and been in heaven with him. But I wholly press a second.

2. Do but love him as he loveth thee; i. e., you can not answer the greatness of his love, but do it for your measure. If you can not pay him in pounds, yet pay him in pence, and this is fit for him. For, 1. He is worthy of love; there is beauty in

him why thou shouldst desire him; there is none in thee. 2. Thy love shall have a recompense, (2 Tim. iv. 8;) he never can have recompense from thee. 3. He loves thee first with his own love; now that is unreasonable not to reflect his beams, and return him his own again in similitude, if not in parity.

Quest. Wherein appears the love of the Lord to me, that so I may see how I manifest the like love to him?

Ans. He hath loved thee more than himself, more than his own honor — for "he made himself of no reputation," (Philip. ii. 7;) more than his own comforts — he left the bosom of a Father, and bore the wrath of a Father for thee; more than his own life — he saw thy neck upon the block, and God's ax up to give the bloody and fatal stroke, and he came in thy room, and loved thy life more than his own, lost his own before one hair of thy head should perish, though he knew thee a traitor to God and an enemy to himself. Rom. v. 10; Rev. i. 5, 6. If this be not thus, woe to the living, woe to the dying. What art thou but a sad spectacle, hung up in thy chains in this world, for angels in heaven to see and tremble at, and for devils, sins, and eternal sorrows, like fowls of heaven, to prey upon? Now, is it not fit that thou shouldst love him more than thyself; his honor more than thine own; nay, more than thy life? Rev. xii. 11. I have known them whom the Lord hath revealed this love to, that have thought it too little to do, and hence have wished they had been born in those times that they might have laid down their lives for him. Where is now this love? Doth not self-love swallow up all? Lord, what self-seeking, self-serving, self-minding, self-honoring, self-pleasing, and the Lord himself and his love forgot, as if there were no Christ, or in him no love!

2. He hath loved thee when he might have passed by thee, and loved others that might have won the Lord towards them (I speak after the manner of men) rather than thee; men of greater place, greater gifts and parts, greater pomp in the world; but (Rom. ix.) Jacob shall be loved, Esau hated. He hath passed by kings with their crowns, and now set his heart on thee, a babe, when wise ones knew him not; foolish, when prudent ones see him not; weak, when strong and mighty receive him not. Yea, as the apostle speaketh, (1 Cor. i. 28,) "Base things, and things which are not." God hath made thee nothing in thine own eyes. Behold his love, and now do the like for him. It may be some time thy carnal eye sees more glory in the creature than in Christ, more in the honor of man than in the honor of a Christ, etc.; and hence mightst set thy heart on them rather than on Christ, because strongly tempted so to do, and it may, after some scourges,

be saved at last, yet pass by them, and set thy heart only on him. We judge of a friend by the times of trial, and of a Christian by a time of temptation. Now, a Balaam, a witch, may not dare, in time of temptation, to fall into it. O, get one strain higher, and go one step farther than a witch; though I might let my heart loose after the world, I will not love it; the love of the Lord deserves it, the love of the Lord constrains me to give my love to him, and not to the world, though I might hide it and have pardon for it.

3. He loves thee although thou wrongest him, (Is. xliii. 22–26;) when he is so wronged that he is ready to give thee up; yet, (Hos. xi. 8, 9,) "He is God, and not man." Nay, which is much more wonderful, where sin, there grace abounds. Hence David makes this an argument, (Ps. xxv. 11,) "Forgive because it is great." And hence Moses, (Deut. xxxiii. 9,) "Because it is a stiffnecked people." O, therefore, love him, though he smites thee, though he forsakes thee, wherein he may seem, but indeed doth no wrong to thee, but love thee; chastisement is part of the portion of sons, not of bastards. Heb. xii. 6, 8. But do as that woman when she came to the stake, gave away her clothes, some to one, some to another — "Now, farewell, friends and world, welcome love, Christ." So, if the Lord comes to take away all from thee, the child of thy body, the husband of thy youth, the wife of thy bosom, the comforts of thy life, provisions from thy family, bread from thy mouth, bid farewell to them, give them into the Lord's hands, and now say, welcome Christ. It is usual for Christians at first conversion and espousing, the Lord loves them dearly, and tenders them, shows nothing but love to them, and then their love is fresh; afterward come hard frosts, and winter storms, and cold blasts of displeased afflictions; now the soul apprehending anger, and nothing else, it grows discouraged, so dies. When, if it could stay and wait, it should see all from love, and doing it the greatest good. O, remember this; he doth afflict me; he doth depart from me, he doth fear me with hell, yet I will love him never a whit the less. Though the Lord buries all the blessings he gives me, yet my love shall live, and if it do fall, it shall arise.

4. He loved thee when in thy low estate, (Ps. cxxxvi. 23;) even when as no eye pitied thee, (Ezek. xvi.;) nay, when thou wert vilest, at the hight of thy sin, under deepest depths of misery and straitest captivity, after friends had almost ceased to counsel, word and spirit could do no good, after conscience had warned thee. O, love him when he is in his lowest estate, when his enemies persecute him and his seeming friends forsake

him. Before you came to this land, you thought Christ and persecution, Christ and the meanest condition, nay, Christ and death, would be sweet. The Lord, it may be, doth or will try your love; and here you find Christ and losses in estate, Christ and crosses in your family, Christ and many fears and toils and cares. Do you love him now as well as ever you did for all this? O, never was my heart worse. I doubt not but a discerning Christian may see how all the world is against Christ; nay, many traitors in his own family, who love the bag more than Christ; many foolish virgins, who love their sleep and sloth more than Christ; nay, the hearts and spirits of his own friends declining, that there is not that life of Christ, that presence and savor and power of Christ in hearts, in prayers, in lives, and no complaints of this. Now is the fittest time of love, when no eye sees, when no heart loves him or cares for him. Ps. cxix. 126, 127, "Therefore I love thy commands;" when he is shut out of every heart, when none to receive him, if any love it will appear now.

5. He doth love thee constantly every moment. John xiii. 1, 2. He hath thee every moment in his bosom, every moment thou art sinning and he is pardoning. Sin and Satan, and hell and wrath, are every moment waiting to hurt thee, and he is every moment watching over thee, redeeming of thee. Every moment sin and justice cry against thee; and yet he is continually "making intercession for thee." Is. xxvi. 2, 3. Every moment he is blessing when thou art sinning. O, the unknown love of the Lord Jesus. O, these fits of love are not fit for him. A man every moment warming him, but still is cold, it is a sad sign that death is near. You can love him sometimes in a sermon, but soon after cold again; or in a sacrament, and presently heart-dead again; or after answer to prayers and some special deliverances, and then the heart is unaffected again, and a little pang of love must content Christ. If he ceaseth one moment to love thee, and to manifest it to thee, then cease to love him; if he ceaseth not to love thee dearly, never to leave thee, O, then ever love him.

Object. But we have such distractions and cares.

Ans. Men in love will follow their work, and women will do the housewifery of the house, and yet love is at no time to seek to their husbands; and shall the Lord have less?

6. He loves thee with an unmeasurable love. Rom. v. 20, "Where sin there grace hath abounded." Hence (Eph. ii. 3, 4) "love" and "great love." Verse 7, "Exceeding riches of his grace." For there is in Christ, —

1. A created love. One man loves another exceedingly, as Jonathan did David. Now, he hath the perfection of all human or angelical love toward his people put in him.

2. Uncreated love, infinite love of a God, and hence it is unmeasurable. He thinks nothing he doeth too much, nothing he gives too dear. Hence, when world is slain, Satan cast out, when he is out, sin must out; when some sins are removed, the rest must; when they are out, then death must; when death, then hell. And when there is no life, no grace, he works it; it decays, he restores it; it can not act, he quickens it; it can not, doth not grow, he waters it. He hath given thee the earth, and the days of peace and patience; these are too little. He calls thee, and when thou canst not come, draws thee, and gives thee pardon, that is too little. He gives earth to thee, that is too little, (for they are made co-heirs;) he gives promise to thee, that is too little; he gives himself and Spirit, and can he do more? Yes; we can not drink in all that goodness and love; hence he gives eternity to thee, and he shall more and more enlighten thee; not only let thy soul live to bless him, but thy poor body, and every dust of it, to be raised up to glory with him. What the Lord promised to Abraham, "In blessing I will bless," that portion is thine. O, now love him without measure. "O, how I love thy law!" How did David love it? I can not tell; but if he loved the word of Christ, then much more the person of Christ, the presence of Christ, everlasting fellowship with Christ. O, take heed of giving Christ, and measuring out unto Christ his portion, his allowance, that when the Lord comes to you for more love, (as he doth daily,) you give him that answer which many do in their practice — you have let him have as much as you can; so that you can not spare any more from yourselves, from a base world, from wife and child and creature, from a slothful course; you hope the Lord will accept of that little he hath. I confess that a little water in a spring is better than much that comes by land floods; but be sure it be a spring, else not accepted. Beloved, time was you lived without Christ, did nothing for him; now you do, and what thou dost this year, didst last year, and no more. Will you thus stint the Lord? Either do more, give more, or mourn you can not. O, one life, one heart is too little for him. It hath put me to sad fears of many men's estates to see this frame, a world of sin without measure every day. Where is the Christian that loves the Lord every day? How can any then say much is forgiven, when they do not love much?

7. He loves thee now in glory, there hath prepared a place for

thee, (John xiv. 1–3,) where he longs for thee. John xvii. 24. You know Pharaoh's butler, when exalted to his place, forgot poor Joseph. One would think now the Lord Jesus is in glory, and hath God, and angels, and his kingdom, to content him, he shall never look after such a worm, such a poor helpless creature as thee. But, as the High Priest carried the names on his breast and precious stones, so the Lord Jesus hath thy name writ upon his very heart. O, now love him when he exalts thee to glory, to give the kingdom of heaven on earth with peace and quietness. When Germany lies in blood, and eastern churches slain by the dragon, devoured by the Turk, when England's lights and lamps are going out, no people have such peace, such glory, in so small a time. Beloved, now where is love? The churches of Christ never lost their love so much as when they had their peace, and have been sixteen hundred years a-learning, by afflictions and persecutions, how to enjoy their peace, and to have their love smell as sweet as when beaten most, and yet have not, but, like the globe without the cross in the emblem, rolling and running farther and farther from God, *in cruce quies*. O, unreasonable, to love him least whom he tenders most. Does not prayer grow cold for the name of Christ? Then love grows cold. Does not plenty of means make thy soul slight means? When you went many miles to hear, and had scarce bread at home, O, you thought, if once you had such liberties; but when they are made yours, now what fruit? Dost not fail in affections to saints? O, love dies! Christ deals not so with thee, and who knows but in rocks and mountains of the wilderness thou mayst lament those evils which peace breeds now?

8. He loves thee so as when any evil touches thee, he has a feeling of it, and is grieved at it, (Judges x. 16; Is. lxiii. 9;) nay, he then comforts thee most, both in them and by them. John xiv. 27, "Not as the world gives peace, so I give it to you." O, then, grieve thou for those evils that betide him; the wrongs that others offer him, but especially the unkindness thy own soul shows him. Mark v. 3, He "mourned for the hardness of their heart." Eph. iv. 29, 30, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," and "grieve not the Holy Ghost." Heb. iii. 10, "Forty years long was I grieved because they erred." I confess you will wrong him, but will you, must you be impenitent too? Did his enemies grieve him on earth, and shall his friends grieve him in heaven, and no sorrows, no secret tears? Is there no good nature? But what, is there no spirit of mourning? It may be many a day and

week hast thou grieved him, and not a sign to any purpose to ease thee of thy sin, but what has eased thee in thy sin. O, now comfort his heart again after thou hast most grieved him; comfort his spirit that is dying, sighing in thee; as he comforts thee by thy troubles, comfort him by making a right use of all thy sins to be more humble, more vile, to love him the more, and love thyself the less, as the prodigal son. Luke xv. 18, 20, 24.

9. He loves thee so, that though he departs, he will not, does not stay long from thee, though you may think it long. Is. liv. 7. Hence it is wonder to see when heart gone, love lost, life lost, yet suddenly thou art brought down on thy knees. O, it is the Lord that does it! Thou wast in sorrow of heart, he did not stay long, but came and comforted thee; thou wast in thy sins, it was not long but he delivered thee; thou wast in want of knowledge of him, it has not been long but that he has revealed the Lord to thee; thou hast been in afflictions and troubles, it has not been long but he has heard thee; so give him the like love. I know you will fall from him in love, in delight, in care; but do not stay long from him. Sometimes the baits of the world will draw thee from him when thou hast thy ease and peace; O, think it was better with me once than now! when fears drive thee from him, yet return. 1 Sam. xii. 21, 22. O, here is that which hardens hearts, breaks your peace, and grieves, the Lord, so as he is forced to send many sad afflictions, because you lie in your falls. O, be not long, nor far from him. He returns to thee when thou art most unkind to him; return when he is ever kind. He returns to thee though he has no need of thee; thou hast of him. "He will not leave thee." O, leave not him!

10. He has from before all worlds loved thee, when no reason for it. Jer. xxxi. 1–3. Thou hast neglected to love him long, all thy youth, nay, it may be all thy life; O, you beloved of the Lord, begin to do it now, when there is all reason for it, when heaven calls for it, earth calls for it, ordinances plead for it, Spirit saith come, and calls for it too. It may be thy life is not long. What, not yet?

Quest. But how shall I come to do this, thus to love the Lord?

Ans. The Lord only can plant, can water this grace; yet because the Lord does it by means, I will give you some now.

I. Labor to find out the true sweetness, and to taste the bitterness of the deceitful sweetness of all creatures; for this is a

rule in reason, a man's affections, like streams, must run some way; and it is a rule in theology, stop the affections from running to the creature, and in a sincere heart it will run unto Christ, (Hos. ii. 6, 7,) if it be from all creatures. Now, then, the affection is turned from the creature, when it finds the bitterness of the deceiving sweetness of it; and, secondly, finds out the real sweetness of it; for make it as a rule, when a man's heart can not love Christ, (unless it be when it is benumbed,) it is because he has somewhat else to joy his heart; now, let the creature yield you no more joy, and Christ has your love; indeed, you may and must joy in the real sweetness of it, and this will increase, and not diminish your love.

Quest. What is the real sweetness of the creature?

Ans. Christ's love. O, see this! if Christ should not love thee, would not thy life be death, thy salvation from many dangers be damnation, thy friends miserable comforters, thy joys sorrows? What good would any thing do thee if thou hadst these thoughts — all these I have, but wrath with them? What comfort can a man take in his feast, if news were then brought that after it is done, you must go to the stake to be burnt? You that joy in your pastimes, one frown of Christ would blast all. O, see this! Psalm lxiii. "Thy loving kindness is better than life; in thy favor is life." Now, joy for this, and this will knit your heart nearer to him. For Jesus' sake, ponder this point.

Now, 2. Taste the bitterness of the sweetness remaining now it is distilled; and Satan shows a threefold sweetness, before, in, and after the enjoying of it.

Now, 1. Before, remember how they have drawn away and held thy heart from God, done thee more hurt than all afflictions; many a sweet smile hadst thou had from God, but for them.

2. In the enjoying of it, it is sweet; but when it is sweet to thee, it is then most bitter to the heart of God; when thy joy is kindled, the Lord's sorrow is stirred up and provoked.

3. After; 1. It will draw thy heart from God; and, 2. It will be bitter in thy belly at last. Whatever sweetness draws thee from the love of Christ, O, it will be bitter. Rom. vi. 21. Chew upon this, and see if any thing here be worthy of your joy, and if not, then return to your first husband.

II. Taste the all-sufficiency of the love of Christ. A woman that is not content with her husband's love, she will not love him as it is fit. So when other things make love to us, and the Lord's love is not enough, (Cant. i. 4,) "More than wine." Hence "the upright love thee." Do but sit down and think what this

is: if once he loves thee, whatever he can he will do for thee; he will order all thy life, not one thing shall hurt thee; every thing in providence shall work for thy glory, sins, sorrows, etc., so as thou shalt say his denials are better than his gifts, his blows better than smiles, his withdrawings better than his presence, these evils better than joys, and when once he loves me, he will never leave me; that come life, come death, I am safe. O, taste this!

III. See the Lord Jesus now as he is, and in truth this were enough to make any profane heart love him, much more a saint espoused to him; but the Lord has hid himself from their eyes. Shall he be so, is he so from yours? 1 Pet. i. 8, "When seeing not with bodily eyes, but with faith ye love him." 1 John iii. 1–3, "We shall see him as he is." Why, suppose the day of doom was come, Christ in the clouds and all creatures before him, all angels ministering to him, in all the glory of his Father; O, then, the love of Christ; O, one smile, one word of Christ would be precious! Lord, that men should be in a dream! See Christ a little higher set in his throne, a place more glorious, though less seen, in all the glory of his Father, all mighty angels ministering to him, all the world put into his hand, doing what he will, and all he will; why will you not love him now? Is the gospel a fable? Say so if it be, then love him not if you can. When Simeon and the wise men saw him, though but in his abasement, they honored him; much more now if they see him in glory. It is a question whether the beams of the sun are fire. Some demonstrate it thus: Take a glass and gather together the beams, it burns. Therefore so, if you would see so as to be affected, gather together the beams of his glory and love; thus you see the means to get fit love; and if it be lost, O, now get it again, lest the Lord strain for it, else you are not fit; and if it be not any love that suffices, much less no love, as in many of you; but consider, (1 Cor. xvi. 22,) "He that loves not Christ, let him be accursed." O that this might be won from you! O, little love goes out to Christ; who sees it not? Ordinances of Christ, men are weary of them; the truths of Christ, despise them; the servants of Christ, they quarrel with them. Now, recover your love; the Lord help you so to do.

Section III.

Exhort. 3. To do the work of Christ, to be daily at it, and finishing of it; for look as it was with the head, it is so with all the members that are to remain a while in this life, they have some work to do for the Lord; some common, some special work;

and when that is done, now they are ready to return home again. Hence, (John xvii. 4, 5,) "I have finished the work;" and now he stands at the door and knocks, and is ready for entrance.

"Now, glorify me with thyself," and you shall find a faithful heart will neither be willing nor ready to go till this is done.

Quest. What is this work I am to do?

Ans. I have answered this elsewhere at large, yet these two things I would say:—

1. That a man's chief work lies not in facile duties; for though grace and Christ's Spirit make duties easy, his yoke easy, yet there is a contrary spirit that will make them hard and difficult at first.

2. Lest I should leave you unsatisfied altogether, we shall find a Christian life is carried with a double motion: 1. In seeking of God in his ordinances; 2. Or in walking with God out of his ordinances; these are joined together. Gen. vi. 8, 9, Noah found grace, hence sought it, though not in the eyes of the world; and hence Noah walked with God. Hence we see Christ was some time in the mount alone, some time abroad, going up and down doing good. Moses in the mount and in the camp too. Now, look as before a man is justified, his chief work, then, is to seek God in his ordinances for a principle; so a soul now espoused to Christ is to walk with Christ. Now, walking implies constant following of another, or a continual work; so Christ has work for you every moment. Hence, in every company, time, place, temptation, inquire thus: Am I not like to lose my time, my heart, Christ's honor? What work has Christ for me to do? Hold here, for here lies your work. Look as an ambitious man asks, How serves this for my honor? and Satan, how he may dishonor Christ; so do you ask, how you may honor him. Rom. vi. 19, "As you have given yourselves instruments of iniquity," etc. And now because we live in times and places wherein men have so much work of their own to do, that Christ is neglected, wherein very few walk with God. Hence men, taking men's examples for patterns and copies of their course, content themselves to do as others do. And this being a close act, mainly consisting in what is unseen, and because men are apt to put off Christ with desires, and serve Satan indeed, and because apt to resolve all religion into some two or three duties or graces, and because men's hearts are catching at comforts and promises; but commands tedious and burdensome — I shall press this upon these motives; only here let me premise when I press you to this, it is not to a covenant of works, as though you could act yourselves, but we look to Christ's blood and Spirit to set on

things. I speak to them under grace, who have the Spirit without and faith within to act and carry them here. But, —

Motive 1. Whose work will you do? You can not cease to do Christ's work, but you must do your own work, (I speak not for idleness;) i. e., you must serve your lust. Now, consider what good did thyself ever do thee? nay, Satan never such as thy own self. And will you fall down to such an image? Shall thy lusts have content more and rather than Christ?

2. Consider the Lord will take care and charge of thee, to do thy work, to bring about thy ends for thee, do but thou do his. Martha was cumbered about many things, hence forsook the better part; so men neglect, forget Christ's work, because of so many distractions of their own. What will become of my hundred talents? What will become of my wife, child? Now, do you take care of the Lord's work, take that for your charge, and the Lord will take charge of you. The best, readiest, and only way to have your own ends is to seek the Lord's and forget your own. As in Solomon, his great work and care was to rule a state well, and the Lord gave all the rest. Set thy face to the sun, and these shadows will follow you. The servant takes charge of his master's work, and he need not trouble himself for meat and drink, and *e contra*.

First. There shall not any evil hurt thee, whereas else thy good things shall. Is. xxvii. 3.

Secondly. All creatures in heaven and earth shall serve that man that serves his God, (Hos. ii. 21, 23;) whereas else they groan under thee.

Thirdly. Angels shall come out of heaven to guard thee.

Fourthly. Nay, the Lord Jesus himself shall stand at the top of the ladder, that when every thing else shall leave thee, he shall then bring the best wine at last; he will be a portion to thee. Ps. xvi.; Phil. iii. 8.

3. Consider that the more difficult any duty is, the more sweetness shall you receive if you break through it; men plead difficulty, I plead gain. Hence he that overcomes shall eat of the hidden manna. Hence never any so comforted, honored, as Christ; because never any went through so hot a work for the Father as Christ. Phil. ii. You plead the difficulty of a Christian life, and taste not the sweetness of that life. If you can do no more than what is easy and pleaseth self, the Lord will never let you taste the sweetness of pleasing him. Have you not sometimes found your hearts dead to prayer? Yet you fell to it, and then would not but have took the season for a world.

4. Consider, let the duty be to nature impossible, yet the Lord

is at hand to help, even when no strength. Is. xl. 29. Nay, (Heb. xi. 34,) "Out of weakness were made strong." If you had no Christ, no Spirit, no promises to assure you of help, you might then cease acting, and say, It is impossible I should ever overcome such evils, attain to that measure; but when promises to assure, and Christ and Spirit at hand, now to plead impossibility is to reproach the Lord; to think he will set his people to make brick and give them no straw; nay, to war against God, and to make the Lord war against you. Num. xiv. You know how they cried out of impossibilities, and how the Lord's anger rose when they were ready to enter Canaan. So when men are ready to enter upon possession of Christ and promises, then impossibilities appear. Consider, therefore, what the Lord did for David, Gideon, Samson, who went out in the name and Spirit of the Lord, and were helped. If you were under the law, you might plead this; but under grace, it is horrible to make this excuse.

5. Consider, if the Lord do not help, (as he will be free,) yet he will accept thy will; I know he will not accept the wishes of servants, yet he will accept the will of sons; neither will he accept the will of sons in a work they might have strength from him to do, and go not to him for it; but in that case he will, as 2 Cor. xii. 9; i. e., it is enough, I accept thee; and this is very sweet, that for his own sake he should be pleased as well with the will as with the work; for this is that which troubles, I would have help, the Lord gives none. Why, the Lord accepts of it as if thou didst it, as in David's building a temple. For a Christian's work is done two ways.

First. Sometimes by feeling, when we feel help.

Secondly. Sometimes by faith, by going to another for it; and this the Lord accepts most mercifully, for this is his victory over all sin, even his faith. When we see a duty hard, and do not go to the Lord for help, then we are overcome properly; for out of the abundance of the heart the person acts for Christ.

6. Consider, the Lord will honor thee, (though the work doth not.) John xii. 26, "Him will my Father honor," both in this life (Rom. ii. 29) and in that to come. Now, as it is in acting parts, it is no matter what fellow-actors think, God is the great spectator, God will esteem of thee, and conscience shall witness as much when no eye sees, or when men see and judge amiss, yet the Lord approves; and at the great day, before men, angels, and all the world, (1 Cor. iv. 5,) "Then shall every man have praise of God;" and hence (Matt. xxv.) Christ's judgment is made according to the works of his people; because then

they shall not be compared with themselves and their sins, but with the wicked; and hence to set out their glory, he reckons up all they have done. All men, in all their acts, seek to avoid shame and attain honor. Now, if you did know a way for all men in the world to honor you, would you not attend it? What are their dreams to God's honor? Hence not one act but is now chronicled, (Mal. iii. 16;) and afterward rewarded. 1 Cor. xv. 58. O, then, give content to the Lord.

7. Consider the peace you shall have by this means, both while you live and when you die. What is the cause of so many doleful clamors of conscience but a loose, careless heart? The Lord is neglected; that when one pleads faith, it will be replied, the true faith is the "faith of the Son of God." Now, is the faith of God a careless faith, a secure, worldly, impenitent, dead faith? You may sit down and rise again, and say, True, yet I will believe; so you may, but it will be with such a trembling spirit as you will find no peace. Neither do I know how any can keep his peace otherwise, for there are children but still-born; if born a living son, thou wilt live to God, necessarily I must do it. But by this means, O, there is unspeakable peace. Matt. xi. 29, 30. Hence Paul, "I have finished my work," etc. John xiv. 21–24. You live without God, and walk without God, and pray without God; but there is a day approaching that you shall appear before the Lord Jesus. You shall wish then — O that I had lived so and so! O, do that now.

8. Consider the Lord will have it done; it must be done. Hence Paul said, "Necessity lies upon me, and woe to me," etc. The Lord should be forsworn if he should not bring you to it. Luke i. 73–75, "According to the oath," etc. Beloved, you think lazy desires will serve. No, it must be done. You say, I can not; it must be better with you. And hence look for a rod, and that the Lord will bring you into great affliction till all is removed, and so purge you; and if one affliction will not do it, then worse shall come; he loves you better than so. And remember you have had warning this day; you came hither for the Lord's work, and now your own jostles it out. Look that God will take away the kingdom from you, or set oppressors over you, or send some stings among you; and then say, O, I may thank my walking unworthy of God and gospel for this.

9. Consider, else you will make the blood of Christ shed of no effect. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Now, wicked men need not fear this, no blood shed for them. Will you do so? God forbid. The Jews have killed him; will you drag him up and down the streets, trample on his blood, and put him to open shame?

10. Consider your time is but short, and you have done but little work, and it is not long but that your crown shall be put upon your head. It is noted of Enoch (Gen. v.) that he walked with God three hundred years, (and that having sons and daughters, having family contentments and encumbrances,) and he lived the shortest time. I am sure angels are content to come out of heaven to do the work of God. What! not do it here? Paul thought himself born too soon, because for a time he lived without Christ. O, but now make trial, and you will find it the sweetest life, that you will say, Why have I neglected this so long? And if thou dost not find seven times more peace therein than in the world, never set foot here.

Quest. How shall I thus do the work of Christ?

Ans. I. "Without Christ you can do nothing." John xv. 5. The sun runs still, because it is light of itself; so when the Lord is in you, you will do so. Hence go not out to any duty in your own strength; for then you will either not do it, or not hold out in it. No man can hold out at his work that feeds not abundantly on his meat; so here. And here note but these two things:—

1. Do not only in ordinances do thus, but out of ordinances; then, as in particular times of trial, (for the Lord will not give you in an ordinance as much grace as shall serve you out of it,) lift up your hearts to Christ, and say, as Christ, "Father, the hour is come; now glorify thy name." John xii. 28. So, Lord, here is work to do, but a dead heart is upon me; Lord, glorify thy name. I have seldom seen but the Lord either helped then, or at some other time when thou didst come, and then the Lord puts thee in remembrance that it is out of respect to that.

2. Thus coming and feeding on the Lord Jesus, believe that he will help, and that shall be so; some have never got strength against sin till then, but this has conquered difficulties. Rom. viii. 37, 38, "In all these things we overcome; for I am persuaded," etc. So you coming helpless to Christ, all his strength is yours by covenant. Be persuaded he can not go from his word; but we must use other means sanctified by Christ, for Christ worketh by means. And, therefore,—

II. Find out where the cause of all your negligence and sloth lies in not doing the Lord's work; nay, of your doing Satan's work. It may be you will say you can not. I know there is that in saints in parts; but this is not the main, therefore I will tell you thus:—

1. Before conversion, the main wound of men is their will.

Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor. Hence, (John viii. 44.) "His lusts ye will do." Hence, (Matt. xxiii. 37,) "You would not." They say, hence, we have a will; I say, no. And hence we answer that great objection for possibilities to keep all laws by universal grace, which it is unjust to punish for not doing that a man can not do. We answer, there is a double impotency, *ex infirmitate* or *ex malignitate*, when men will not. Prov. xi. 12, 13.

2. Hence it follows after conversion, though the will is changed, so that a man would, but can not do many things, *ex infirmitate;* yet the great cause why he can not do more is from the remnant of malignity not yet removed. A man will sleep; he loves it, and secretly loathes the ways of the Lord. Hence the church (Is. xliii. 17) complains of this. A man shall find his heart wills the end exceedingly, but when he comes to will the means, there his heart is weary of them, and loathes them; a man will be careless, and this being not seen, is not fought against. Sin is vilified, and hence the enemy to all good remains still. It is an old rule, *tantum possumus, quantum volumus.* Get Christ to help here.

3. Make this your last end, to live unto Christ and to do his work. Hence Paul did not account his life dear. This is your last end; for the end of being born by faith, nay, of being redeemed by blood, it is to live unto Christ. Tit. ii. 11. When you cry for faith, and peace, and assurance, that is not your end; for he that does so is a very hypocrite, and has a false heart; but it is to live to Christ. Hence Paul (Phil. iii. 9, 10, 12, 13) sought to be found in him, but further to know him, etc. The Father is glorified in our bringing forth much fruit. Hence make it your last end, and then your happiness will lie in acting thus, and that is a man's happiness he is carried to with most infinite delight. For press people to do Christ's work, their hearts are dead; tell them the Lord Jesus shall have a name by what they do for him, yet dead, because that is not their last end. But come to this, now it will do; a man can not bear a cross, yet let him consider the Lord shall gain though I do not; so for faith, so for any other duty. Men think it good, but not their greatest good. Hence see Christ better than thyself, and his honor better than thy glory forever. Hence the Lord denies us help, because we ask it for our lusts, not for himself. James iv. 3.

4. Keep those glorious apprehensions of the Lord and his ways which you have sometimes in an ordinance. You are sometimes near the Lord, and you then see a beauty in Christ,

in his ways, and then thinkest, Shall I ever wrong him more? Then shall you come and lose your light, and so you ever lose your strength and life. Hence Eph. v. 11. It is as with a man that eats, but he loseth and spendeth his spirits; he can do no more work, but faints away. See 2 Pet. ii. 9. Stephen can be content to have stones about his ears, when he can say, "I see Jesus." And hence, when those glorious apprehensions come into your minds, stamp them there; for set up other images of other things, your minds and your hearts will bow down every moment to them. Does not Christ's Spirit do all? Yes; but by this medium. 2 Cor. iii. 18, "As by the Spirit of the Lord."

Section IV.

Use 4. After you have done your work be ever humble, and be ready to give the Lord the honor of his grace, that ever he gave any thing to you, that ever he did any thing by you; for the last end of all the elect, it is to admire and honor the riches of God's grace. Eph. i. 5, 6. Hence the fall was permitted; never should grace have been seen, if sin and misery had not come in. Now, if this be our last end in glory, then the heart is ready to have immediate fellowship with Christ there, when it is ready to act for its last end. Hence it is frequent, in the Psalms, when David was in any strait, wanted any mercy, nay, the presence of the Lord here, this is the last end he pursues, the last word he speaks before the Lord, "My soul shall bless thee," as Ps. lxiii. 3, 4; and hence, when all his enemies were subdued, and he ready to lay all in the dust, he gives the Lord all. 2 Sam. xxii. *per totum*, and xxiii. 5. Beloved, this is Heaven's work. O, learn this song before you go there, which none can learn but the redeemed and sealed of the Lord. Rev. xiv. 3; John i. 14. It is writ of Christ, he was "full of grace and truth." Do you ever think to meet with him that get not your hearts full of the sense of it?

Before I come, therefore, to press this, I shall premise these two things:—

First. That the Lord, in all his dealings with his people, seeks lastly to bring about the glory of his grace. He regards nothing men do, if at last they deny him this; he respects not what sins and evils men have, if at last he gets this, for this is his last end. Hence all he doth to his people, for his people, by his people, it is for this. And hence,—

1. He leaves them a long time in their graves and sins, that they live like other men, which is strange, that he that has loved

them so long should leave them so long to be as bad as any; yet this he doth, because it makes for the praise of his grace; (Eph. ii. 4, 7, 8,) "Dead in sin, that in ages to come," etc. And this doth so confound God's people that they wish not only heaven, but earth, and ages to come may record this love.

2. Hence out of men fallen he picks out usually the poorest and vilest, the younger brother less loved out of a family, leaves elder, (Rom. ix. 11;) and "the foolish and weak things, and things that are not, that no flesh might glory but in the Lord," (1 Cor. i. 26, 31;) and this is strange that the Lord should choose thus, but this he doth to blur the glory of all the world.

3. Hence the Lord saves by faith, and justifies by faith, and seals by faith, (Eph. i. 13,) and sanctifies by faith, and glorifies by faith. 1 Pet. i. 3. So that all a Christian's life is a beggar's life, and it is strange the Lord should choose the basest, poorest grace to save by; and the end is the glory of his grace. Rom. iv. 16. It is of faith that it might be of grace.

4. The Lord leaves many wants in his people, under which they sit sighing, and that sometime very long, refuseth to hear their prayers, that they may repair to the throne of grace, and so, in conclusion, bless grace. Heb. iv. 16.

5. Hence the Lord takes away sometimes those feelings, those enlargements they had, and baits them with most vexing sins and pricking distempers, (2 Cor. xii. 7, 9;) and it is to advance grace.

6. Hence the Lord is sometimes angry with his people, and hides his face from them, that if ever he returns in love, his grace may be the sweeter and last the longer. Is. liv. 7. Nay, hence sometimes strips them so of all that they have had, or can do, that if you ask, What have you now to say for yourselves? Nothing but grace; their mouths are stopped. Hence, (Ps. vi.,) "Lord, save me for thy mercies' sake;" (Ps. li. 11,) "According to the multitude of thy mercies," etc.

7. Hence the Lord speaks peace to his people, that they may say, I was so vile, and yet loved. O grace! O love! Ezek. xvi. 63. When they see nothing but shame, and shame covers them, and are afraid to appear before God, it is for this end. I will name no more. Do you not observe it? Sometimes you shall find the Lord so strangely carrying matters as if he did not love nor care for his people, against the hair and grain of their desires, and when all comes to winding up, it is to advance grace. All a man's good days and bad days, all God's frowns and smiles, all the Lord's food and physic, [redacted] God cares for, works, plots for, it is to do his people no more hurt than this, to advance his

grace in them and by them. All his hewings and hammerings of you, nay, his knocking you to pieces, and new melting and new casting of you, it is that you may be vessels of his glorious grace, that you may be able to live in the air of God's grace, to suck in and breathe out grace; and let all the power of hell seek to blur it, yet grace shall conquer. Who would not be under grace? O, poor creature! Satan is tempting, sin vexing, yet grace must reign.

Secondly. This I say, that God's own people do, by strange ways and courses, deny the Lord, and deprive the Lord of the glory of his rich grace; for that being the diamond in God's crown, and the beloved attribute which God intends to advance, all the policy of hell is against this. This is the reason why Satan's enmity is so bitter against faith, as in Peter; and observe, however there may be many temptations, his end is to crush faith. The reason is, as it is with an enemy, if the besieged has water brought to the city by pipes, he cuts off them and stops them; so faith fetching all from grace and returning all to grace, hence faith is opposed most, and hence the unregenerate part will take Satan's part, and doth strangely rob the Lord of the glory of this, though I confess the Lord will have it for all that they seek to scatter it. Is. xliii. 21, 22. It is strange to see how few plot for the praise of grace. Hence how many are straitened; nay, do cross Christ in this. As,—

1. If the Lord gives them not what grace they would, then they slight what little he bestows; and if he gives them much, then they solace themselves in it, and grow puffed up and proud. It is the temper of God's own people to set up such a measure of God's grace and Spirit which they would have, and therein they do well. Paul (Phil. iii. 11) looked to the resurrection of the dead; but if the Lord denies them that, (as he will make his people live from hand to mouth,) they slight what they have, either as if all were but hypocrisy, or because it is little, not so much as they would have, and herein they do ill; for here the Lord loseth the glory of some grace, for it is grace that you have the least desires after; nay, that you do but know what it is and see the want of it, and yet ever complaining and never rejoicing; for every degree of grace in saints is virtually saving, though formally common. But suppose the Lord fills the bottle full, and gives as much peace, affections, enlargements of heart as it has almost required, (for there are spring tides and overflowing times of God's Spirit,) now they are ready to swell and be puffed up above measure, as Paul; (2 Cor. xii. 7,) "Lest I should be exalted above measure;" for there is self-love in saints. Hence

they desire an excellency in themselves; hence, when they find none of their own, they are apt to deck and set out themselves with what the Lord has done, and so to joy in this, and now to think themselves better than others of God's saints, whereas they should be more vile and advance grace the more. Eph. iii. 8, "To me, the least of saints." And hence the Lord, after greatest deliverances and mercies, sends great sorrows, as to them in the wilderness. Hence the Lord takes away afflictions, and they die, that grace might be the more advanced.

2. If the sins of their hearts are common, and can not be removed, and so seem little, then they pass them by, and never take notice of them, God will pardon them, and hence the Lord has sad times of reckoning (with a rod in his hand) with his own people. Ezek. vi. 9. That those loose times are heavy times, this is for my neglect, etc.; but hereby grace loseth glory; for how can they see how deeply they are indebted to the Lord, if they see not their debt? On the other side, if their sins be very violent, and their distempers so strong that they think none like me, now their hearts sink and die away and grow discouraged, and all the use they make is this, I think it will never be better with me; and can there be life for me so dead, deliverance, redemption for me in such bondage, love for one that can not but loathe myself? and if others did know me they would do so too. Can the Lord love me now? Yes, beloved, that he can and will. Is. lxiii. 16, "Though Abraham know us not, yet," etc. But here is your sin, when you should make this use of all, to feel the more need of grace to pity, and say, the more precious shall grace be to me forever. Your hearts now sink. The Lord brings his people into very low condition, to humble them and to show them more of his grace. Ps. lxxviii. 19, "Can God prepare a table?" They spake therein against God. So it is here; for herein the Lord's grace is seen, to love them when lepers.

3. Grace that has been shown for times past, they forget it. 2 Pet. i. 9. And what is this but destroying God's grace? For why is grace so precious at first conversion, that heaven and earth are too little to hold praises enough for it? And afterward, the Lord has little love; O, you forget what once you were, and what the Lord has done. Hence 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. I was so and so, etc.; but now have received abundant grace. You have had many meetings with God, many answers from God, many consolations and times of refreshing and reviving, and these forgotten and buried, the life of them after a year or two expired. And what is this but eclipsing God's grace? On the

other side, as for grace for time to come, they fear it, especially when worms and no men in their own eyes. Hence, saith God, "Fear not, worm Jacob." Is. xli. 14. There is a certain divining spirit, (as one once told me,) that until that was pulled out, no honor can the Lord get. Before you come to word or prayer, thou wilt fear thou shalt never get any good; and when the Lord gives any, thou wilt fear thou shalt never hold out; and what promise soever is made, thou wilt fear thou shalt never find it. And what does this but eclipse grace? We should go with boldness to the throne of grace; nay, hence, let the Lord send never so much mercy for the present, a fear will cut off all, that all this will rise up in judgment against me.

4. When they are most fit to honor God's grace by faith, now they will not believe, not then above any other time; for then a man is most fit to honor grace when he feels most need of it; and when hath he most need, but when he feels most emptiness? Why, now, above any other time, a man will not come in, but will have somewhat in himself first, and then he will, when his heart is so and so sweetly settled, etc. Hence (Luke xiv.) poor, and blind, and lame, and halt, compelled to come in. One would think there needed not that; but now when fittest, now they will not. For let any man observe what would endear his heart so much to grace as this — to think if it be the Lord's mind to save a poor, dead, damned creature, then happy I! This is wonderful; this hath quickened dead love, and dead faith, and a dead heart. And, on the other side, if the Lord delay, if it comes not at their own time, then they distrust it. Grace, alas! I feel myself never a whit better. For there be two things in faith.

First. A coming to Christ, which is our work; i. e., God's work in us.

Secondly. Receiving what I come for from Christ, which is the Lord's work. Now, the first gives evidence he shall have it. John vi. 35, 37. Hence the Lord will have them rejoice in what Christ hath, as "my grace is sufficient;" but if it comes not presently, then they cast off faith, and so cast away grace, I feel no good; hence John iv. 48, etc. I know there is a seeming coming to Christ, to have the grace of Christ and sin too, and this you may well cast off; and a coming for his grace and Spirit only, and you despise grace and distrust the Lord if you cast off this, or you seek to put the Lord out of his working by a covenant of grace, (where he takes his time as he pleases,) and give a flat lie to all promises of grace, and refuse to be contented with Christ's grace, that thou mightst have the more attributed to thyself, and the Lord the less.

5. Either they think not of the exceeding greatness of the Lord's love and free grace to them; and hence Paul bows to Heaven for this. Eph. iii. 16, 17. And hence it comes to pass, that look as it is with sweet things, swallow them down in the lump, you never taste the sweetness to purpose, nor never commend them; so it is when men swallow down God's love and chew not upon it, whereas if they did but think of it, O, how sweet would it be! Ps. lxiii. 5, 6. Lord, how many days and weeks are spent thus! It is apparent you have the profession of a Christian life; but do you taste the sweetness of a Christian course? No. Why, if you did think, you would; but you are weary at night, sleepy in the morning, busy in the day, dead on the Sabbath. Hence think not, hence give not God the glory of grace; or if they do think of it, and the greatness of it, then they can not think so great things should be given unto them or done for them; that God should love me as his Son, make me an heir of all he has with him, redeem me that have despised his blood. It is too good news to be true. Hence the disciples believed not for joy. Luke xxiv. 41. Hence, when delivered out of Babel, we were in a dream. This robs the Lord of grace; for the greater the love is, and the more you take, the more love shall the Lord have; it can not be otherwise, if you come to say this is mine.

6. Either they will pore only on their sins and distempers and miseries, and never look unto Christ, the brazen serpent, and search for a righteousness of their own, and can not find it, and hence pore still. As when men have wounds, they only think on them, that when awakened out of sleep, they complain in their beds, like the Israelites (Exod. vi. 9) that would not hear Moses because of anguish. As the impotent man answered Christ; John v. 5–7, "Wilt be made whole?" he turns his eyes upon his misery, "I have none else to help me at the time;" here is but this means, and when I come myself, others step in before me, etc. Now, so do men, and never look beyond means, the Lord can, the Lord will, and so eye not him. Or, on the other side, if they get healing of their wounds, then they eye Christ only. Eph. ii. 6. They were exalted in heavenly places, yet remember, as verses 11, 12. For let any Christian see he is poor and miserable, but he is not much affected with it, nor afflicted with it; and so eye Christ, and trust to Christ, and ease himself here, and say, We must look only to Christ, either you will hear of his fall, (yea, and himself shall find a decay,) or he will grow very proud, unfit to give all to Christ. Is there grace here?

7. Either if the Lord gives him any thing himself and mercy,

he will now add something of his own to Christ, and pull the veil of the law over the face of the glory of Christ, (Gal. i. 6,) or else do nothing at all for him, unless it be when the good fit takes him, under a pretense that Christ must do all, as here the five wise virgins that fell asleep; and thus you see how grace is opposed by the children of grace. Now, therefore, my exhortation is, to take heed of this, and be ever ready to attribute all to the Lord, as they cried when the second temple was building from beginning to end, (Zech. iv. 6, 7;) so that thou wast spared so long, that called by means that the Lord should by faith accept, that he should speak peace; this is grace, that though vile, yet he will save me. It is grace, that though I can do nothing, yet he will help me, and afterwards crown me. O, this is wonderful grace! And,—

First. Do not only give the Lord the glory of grace to redeem you from misery; for this you may do, and be full ready to give it, yet perish at last, as the Israelites that sang God's praises did; but that he will save thee from greater; i. e., from sin. And,—

Secondly. Not only when you feel nothing, but when you feel most; O, to honor grace! And,—

Thirdly. Not to do it coldly, but with a heart inflamed with a sense of it, that I live, I have, I do, I am what I am. O, it is grace! So that now, if the Lord shall come and ask you, What will you say, if I will deliver you from all misery, subdue all sins, pass by all wrong, hear all prayers, do all good to thee, do much good by thee, love thee every moment, give a kingdom when thy work is done to thee, and myself, better than all? Say, Lord, I can never recompense this; I shall be, I hope, the more vile in my own eyes forever, and give all to grace. O, sing that song, or get that song by heart now; for (Rev. vii. 10) there is a song, "Salvation to the Lamb," which none else could sing. This is our work, and a great work indeed.

Quest. How shall I do this?

Ans. 1. Get a new light from the Lord to show you clearly the infinite, endless, unknown evil of the least sin. Paul was a proud Pharisee until he saw sin, and Jer. iii. 24, 25. For if sin be seen, one smile, one day, nay, a moment's breathing time in this world will be matter of amazement to thee after all thou hast and hast done; much more when thou seest so many sins, and that in every thing. Entreat the Lord to do this. We walk up and down the world, and say we sin and grieve the Lord; but, O, it is not known! happy art thou if the Lord has discovered it; then thou wilt say, Why doth the Lord do any thing for me? Could not he pick out stones, nay, toads, that

never sinned against him, rather than me to enjoy him? Especially is sin vile in thee, so near God, and so near heaven too. Angels were hurled down for one sin.

2. Set a high price upon a little grace; a man will be exceeding humbly thankful for the giving a little of that which he highly esteems, much more for giving much of what we value. The poor woman of Canaan (Matt. xv.) was glad of crums. How thankful do you think she was for loaves? That made her ready to receive all; "Be it as thou wilt;" so it shall be with you; for if you prize a little, O, when all shall be given, this will swallow you up into grace. And it is certain, there is never a mercy but it is great, if you consider him that gives it, who receives it, him that bought it. But the most of God's grace in us appears to be but small; hence we prize it not, and hence never ready to give all to the Lord again.

3. Learn to put a difference between your double being; for every Christian has a double being: 1. In himself; 2. He has a subsistence in Christ. Now, look upon yourselves as in yourselves, you will ever complain there, ever dead, and never have your hearts ready to bless the Lord. If you only look on yourselves in Christ, you will be proud, and never give the Lord honor. I say, therefore, put a difference between these two; for men appropriating to themselves what is Christ's, they rob Christ of his glory. Hence Paul so humble. 1 Cor. xv. 10, 11. For if you look upon yourself, I am dead, guilty, damned, weak, here will be shame; if any life, or grace, this is Christ's. As a man on a mount is the same man, no taller, only the mountain makes him so; so think of thyself. Or as a mud wall, the sun shines on it, but in itself it is a mud wall still; all the warmth is from the sun.

4. Learn to love grace; what we love we will seek the good of more than our own, and commend it.

First. It is the only first mover of all our good: thou shouldst never have had a drachm of peace or mercy. Why hast it? The Lord will have it so, grace pleads it may be so; this is the only petitioner at court against the cry of sin, against the cry of justice.

Secondly. It is the only support under the heaviest evils! sometimes God frowns, and hell smokes, and Satan tempts, and sin rageth, and it may be no feeling of grace, no reason to show there shall ever be any; now, what have you done? What will you do? Fly for refuge to the promise of grace. Heb. vi. 18. It is such a friend as holds up the head when sinking, when dying holds that, when all fails, and against which the gates of hell

can not prevail. To him that lays hold on grace, this is wonderful. Paul was a man taken with grace; hence he every where commends it. "I was received to mercy," etc. 1 Tim. i. 13, 14.

5. See how the Lord loves that thou shouldst honor it, for the greatest honor grace has is by faith; hence they are put for one, (Rom. iv. 16,) and the great cause why faith stirs not, is because he sees not how the Lord shall have by it the praise of his rich grace, nor how the Lord loves it should do so. For if a man did see how by faith he shall honor grace, and how the Lord is pleased with it, it would draw the heart to be assured, and to bless grace; for when the soul feels itself at worst, why doth it not believe? I shall presume. True, if you have this only in your eye, to save yourself; but if the Spirit presents the glory of grace, and this draws your will that you will glorify grace, then you will say it is no presumption so to do, and so to believe; for the Lord loves his grace, and all means for the glory of grace. Hence he will use faith for that end, to honor grace. O, therefore, see how the Lord loves to have thee honor it! This gives God's heart full rest; this is that which he desires most, because it is his end. This is that which all the business of the world is for. O, see how he loves it! and then you will love to act thus. Now, set upon this last work; look over all your life, and like bees gather honey from every flower, and then come loaden home; so do you, and look over all the Lord's love, turn over all the leaves of it. The Lord has called me. Why? It is because Christ has redeemed. And why that? Because the Father has chosen. And why me? To glorify his grace. And why me rather than another? No reason, but he would. This I doubt not will be the work of Heaven, I am glorified because called, because redeemed, because elected, for none other reason why, and here astonished. You have not Christian hearts in you, that will now have no care to do this work there before you are turned off the stage. You, poor doubting spirits, that see so much vileness, and can not be persuaded, be not discouraged. Wait for the Lord, and say, If he shall save, I shall forever love him the more. Now, hold here, and be ready to do so, and it is certain thou art a vessel of glory, ready to sing the song of the Lamb, and shalt follow him wherever he goes.

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THE SOUL'S IMMEDIATE CLOSING WITH THE PERSON OF CHRIST, AS THE PROPER OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH.

SECTION I.

3. "Went forth to meet the Bridegroom."

HERE needs the explication of three things:—

I. Who is the bridegroom?

Ans. The conclusion of this parable is the explication of this, viz., the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to the several conditions or dispositions the church is in, appears to his church under several relations and titles. The church is oppressed by her enemies; he appears now to her as her prince and king. The church wants wisdom, light, and life; he appears now unto her as a head. The church has been seeking of his love, and yielding herself to the obedience of him as her Lord; at last he appears more fully to her as a husband, or as a bridegroom with whom she is to have her nearest and everlasting fellowship and communion, and so here. And when Christ comes to show most special love, and to have most special fellowship with his people, he thus styles himself. Is. liv. 5, 6. So John iii. 29. And, when the church has tasted that love, she calls him so.

II. What is it to meet the bridegroom?

Ans. To enjoy fellowship and familiarity with him.

III. What is it (to go forth) to meet the bridegroom?

Ans. There are but three ways of going forth to meet with Christ in Scripture.

1. When soul and body, at the last day, meet the Lord in the clouds of the air. 1 Thess. iv. 17. Thus the whole church, the bride, shall appear in glory to meet the bridegroom.

2. When the soul only goes out of the body by the ministry of angels, to meet the Lord in heaven, as Paul, that knew not whether in or out of the body. 2 Cor. xii. 3. "We know it here shall go out of the body." As Christ is said when he went to heaven, "I go to my Father, and your Father." So it goes forth then to Christ, (Eccles. xii. 7,) and neither of these can be meant here; for,—

First. This shows the state of the Jewish church long before Christ's coming, at least among many of them.

Secondly. Because the shutting out (verse 10) is by and at death; hence letting in is so too. Now this was before.

3. When the soul goes out of itself by faith. Hence (John vi. 35) it is called coming to Christ; and this not any physical, natural departing of the soul out of the body, but ethical, supernatural, by the operations of the soul out of itself. And look, as the whole soul by unbelief departs from God in Christ, so the whole soul by faith comes again to God by Christ. The mind sees, affections make after him, will fastens on him, and there depends. This is the first work of faith, or the first faith, the coming (as in all motions there are two extremes) of the soul from a nothingness, emptiness in itself, to an allness and fullness in Christ. And as it is in other motions, if there was a *vacuum*, there would be *motus in instanti;* so if there was an emptiness seen in the world, and all the works of it, and in all fears that all mountains were cast down, faith then would suddenly come by the Spirit to the Lord Jesus, and this coming to Christ is not meant here. For, —

First. These virgins were espoused to Christ by faith already.

Secondly. At the first coming to Christ it goes to the Lord for life in him, and from him; but here, having life already, they go forth to live with him. There the soul goes out to meet him in the gospel, in the promise; here the virgins go forth to meet him in glory. There the soul goes to be justified by him; here the virgins go to be glorified with him; and therefore it is meant of a second going out of the soul by some special acts of faith, after that it does believe, and after it is ready for him. And for explication, —

Quest. 1. From whence doth the soul go?

Ans. It is chiefly going out of this world by trampling this moon under her feet, by forgetting this her father's house, by a holy contempt of it, and a holy dying to it, and all the glory of it. For it is a thousand to one if Satan does not entangle here; if Lot be not taken with Sodom, though burnt out there. And if this going out is to enjoy the Lord in another world chiefly, then going out is from the opposite term, from this world. Hence Paul singles out this mercy. Gal. i. 4. Christ gave himself to deliver us from this present evil world. O, say men, it is a good world, and good being here. It is an evil world. It is so when death comes, but for present it is best. No, it is a "present evil world."

Quest. 2. By what acts of faith doth it go forth?

Ans. There be two affections of the soul that chiefly look to a good absent, yet loving that good, go forth to meet it; those are hope and desire: like the blind man and the lame, both together can make a shift to go. Hope, like the eye, goes out and looks;

desire, like the feet, runs out and longs. The going forth therefore to meet Christ is, 1. By a real expectation of him; 2. By a longing desire to be with him. Hope goes on the top of the world, and cries, O, I see him; desire stands by, and longs for him; O, come, Lord. A careless, blind world looks not for him, the bride doth. Rev. xxii. 17, 20, "O, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly:" by love and joy we embrace and entertain the bridegroom; by hope and desire we go forth to meet the bridegroom. Hence many things are to be observed, and yet not all I might.

Section II.

Doct. 1. That the object to which faith chiefly looks, and closeth with, is the person of the Lord Jesus.

It is the bridegroom himself that the virgins chiefly have to do withal; they are espoused to him as in marriage; there is a giving of themselves one unto another; they make themselves ready for him, they go out to meet him. It is him they love, it is him they want, it is him they look for, it is him they close withal. Whorish lovers look not after him, but his; his peace to comfort them when in horror and fear, his mercy to save them from eternal flames; but virgins look to him; they look to (His) indeed, but it is himself chiefly they care for. John i. 12, To "so many as received him he gave power to be sons." John vi. 27, When the people followed him, but it was for loaves; "Labor not for bread that perisheth, but," etc.; "for him hath the Father sealed." Matt. xiii. 44, The man did not buy the treasure, but bought the field. It is him faith seeks for. Jer. l. 4, "They shall seek the Lord weeping." It is him faith chooses, and is contented with. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Ps. lxxiii. 25. It is him faith glories in. Is. xlv. 25, "In him shall all the seed of Israel glory."

Section III.

Reason 1. It is chiefly and firstly the person of Christ that the Father gives unto the soul. Is. ix. 6. Hence faith lays hold on him. It is not seemly to keep a portion from any, much less orphans' portion. Faith empties a man so as it makes him the poorest orphan in the world; now the father can not, will not keep back his portion, but gives it him. Wicked men have their portion in this world, (Ps. xvii. 14;) and they think the Lord loves them because he blesses them. They have many moral excellences given them, which makes them honored and lovely

in the eyes of men, and they have honor, and that is their reward; they have bread, but not the staff of bread; they have ordinances, but not the Lord in them. The Lord gives them answer to many prayers, but never gives them himself, nor his Son; this is highest love. But it is his Son himself he gives to orphan, fatherless, helpless creatures; for the Lord is their portion. Lam. iii. 24. The "portion of Jacob." Jer. x. 16. Hence it is him that faith receives, and pitches upon; so that the Lord may deny them many outward, many inward blessings; yet they have himself that is better than all; better, as he said, than "ten sons." Children may be prodigals for a time, but when in want they will then sue for their portion. Saints, for a time, may misspend all times, talents, ordinances the Lord gives; but the Lord will bring them to want, and then they will sue for their portion, and the Lord will give, and they will receive that.

Reason 2. Because there is no satisfying of the Father without him; bring Benjamin with you, or never look to see my face. The conscience of a man can never be pacified until God is satisfied for all wrongs. Now, the Lord Jesus has satisfied; nay, perfected forever them that are sanctified, "by once offering up of himself to God." Heb. x. 14. Now, the soul never comes to have settled peace in his own conscience (though peace was purchased before) but by offering up of the Lord Jesus by faith, even Christ himself. The soul wants him, the Father shows a ram in the bush, gives Christ; and that the soul gives him for satisfaction, and offers him to God again. As the priests in the old law, when the sacrifice was slain, then it was offered. God offers the soul a crucified Son, faith takes him and offers him, "Lord, behold thy Son." Rom. iii. 25. And hence comes propitiation and peace, peace to see that God is satisfied. Now, if by faith we come to have the peace of the Father's satisfaction with us, then it must needs pitch upon the person of the Son first. Hence many never have peace, because it is not a Son himself they look for, but somewhat from him. They are blind, and dead, and hard, and these things they would have helped, but close not with Christ himself.

Reason 3. Because the soul can neither actually receive nor expect to receive any thing from Christ, unless it has first pitched upon the person of Christ. A man may hope he shall, and presume and think he shall, and it may be, receive somewhat out of the common courtesy Christ shows to them that look toward him, but never shall receive any saving good thing till now. John vi. 53, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of God, and drink his blood, ye have no life." Look, as it is in our eating, as if a

man should seek to get nourishment out of meat or drink, not by feeding on itself; so it is here. Some said this was a hard saying, and so it is to a carnal heart. Rom. viii. 32. And hence observe, when the Lord promises any great thing to his people, (Is. vii. 14,) he ever brings in the Lord Jesus, that if he shall be given, then all things also.

Reason 4. Because true faith ever closes with Christ by love to Christ, as false faith closes with him out of self-love. Cant. i. 2, 3, "The virgins love thee." That is love, indeed, which is set upon the person. The Lord never puts his pearl nor sets it in a swinish faith that contemns the Son. No; it is a precious faith that loves the Lord. Hence it carries the soul to the beloved.

Section IV.

Use 1. Hence see the reason why the Lord keeps his people hungry and empty, and cuts them short of many spiritual blessings. It is that they might close with and be contented with the person of the Son. There are three things some of God's people seek for, and find not, if the Lord intends good to them.

1. They desire the comforts, and conveniences, and peace of this world. O, rest is sweet! and the Lord will give them none of these, or keep them at short commons with these. And why? That they might lay up their peace and find all in himself. Gen. xv. 1, 2. Abraham, after the slaughter of the kings, was in fear that he might make the Lord his shield. Hos. ii. 6, 7, "She shall seek her lovers, but shall not overtake them."

2. They seek for some good to themselves, in themselves, from themselves. I would fain believe, and can not; I would fain do, says a man; but, alas! he grows worse and worse. The commandment comes, you will do; there is your task, do it; yet they languish and die, and why so? Jer. iii. 22. That they might look for help and righteousness in another, "In the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel," not from the mountains the strongest helps and means; in the Lord it is alone.

3. They seek for grace, and strength, and peace from the Lord Jesus very importunately, and many times very impatiently, and so sinfully, too, and the Lord denies them. It has been better with them than now, therefore they wonder the Lord should be so full and they so empty, and think sometimes to seek no more, and the Lord denies a dole at this door too, that they might content themselves, and lay up their joys in the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. xii. 9, "My grace is sufficient." It is strange that Christ, so able, so ready to help, yet denies. I confess it is

sometime some lust and stumbling-block the Lord Jesus sees; O, but against that they seek; and truly here is the cause, that having no good from him, they might place all their happiness and felicity in him. Look, as it was with Jacob, a great famine comes, and all the sacks are spent, and they are used roughly, though not hardly nor wrongfully, and all was to bring them to the sight and embracings of Joseph; all the time of famine was for this. So the famine of spirit is to last long, and the Lord denies supply, to bring the soul to see, embrace, and rejoice in the Lord Jesus. The most flourishing trees in God's house shall have their winter season, and cast their coat, that they might preserve themselves in their root. This is the great wound of many a believing soul for a time, to rest more contented with what he receives from the Lord, than to quiet himself and his heart with what is in the Lord. Man would have lost his happiness in his own hand, and this the Lord will not suffer his people to lie in long, (Gen. xxvi. 4;) and the best and surest course that can be taken is to cut them short of all. For faith is an unconquerable grace, that whatever it loses out of its own hand, it will find it and enjoy it in another. And, therefore, see God's end, and meet the Lord in this end of his. See all in the Lord, and see in your blessedness therein all your wants, lay it up there, that if you will boast, here you may do it all the day long. For this is God's greatest plot, to pull all men down, that his Son may be set up; to wither all the grass and beauty of all the flowers of the field, that the glory of the Lord might be revealed. I must here give you a taste, for it does me good to think, and it will do you more good to enjoy the sweetness of this truth. There are four things you desire, all which are chiefly laid up in Christ, to that end that you might, in all wants, quiet your hearts with unspeakable peace there.

1. The free grace and love of the Father: this is that, I hope, which you prize most, pray for most, fear the loss of most, would rejoice in the having of most, without which thy life is death, and blessings cursings, and death the beginning of hell. Would you see this love better than life to thee? O, I can not see it, or but very little of it. It is true, look upon yourselves, you can see but little; many fears, many tears, many heart-sorrows, many temptations, many desertions, many vexing sins, many denials to your prayers; but O, look up to that ointment which is poured upon this blessed head, that love is shed abundantly upon the Son from before all worlds, and look what love, what grace the Father shows to him; that love is thine, that love in him is shown to thee. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. Here, stand amazed,

all ye people of the Lord! you have heard the Lord loves you, and sometime believe it; but being under water, can not conceive of it, nor see how he loves you, how dearly, how abundantly! O, look now upon the love of God the Father in the Son; as he loves him, so he loves thee, a worm, a devil, notwithstanding all thy want, all thy sins, all thy miseries. John xvii. 23, 26.

2. Life. O, death is terrible, and a dead heart is woful; it is the great plague that lies upon men without Christ, that are strangers to the life of God. Eph. iv. 18. Is thy heart ever so joyed as when it is most enlarged for God, and hath most delight and liberty in the ways of God? Alas! thy life is but a lingering sickness, a poor life to that which thou hast in Christ! O, look up there. Col. iii. 3. You think, when your hearts are affected, and warmed, and quickened in prayer, by word, or divine thoughts, etc., O, if it might be ever so; how happy! O, but it dies presently, and thou knowest not how. Look up to the Lord Jesus; he is alive when thou art dead, and his life is thine, and it is ever thine in him, even eternal life. 1 John v. 10–12, "This is the record, that he hath given us eternal life." Alas! I find none. O, it is in his Son, in whom thou livest a better life, than men, than kings, than angels. And I doubt not but the Lord suffers temptations to rob you of your life, that you might find it when it is lost, here, and rejoice that when you have none, yet here it is. Blessed be God, he will keep our lives as the life of Jacob was knit up, and bound up, in the life of the child; nay, that life is ours.

3. Conquest and victory over all enemies. It may be you say often, the Lord hath commanded me to seek for help; and he will help, he hath promised so to do; but I find my distempers still raging, Satan still buffeting and winnowing, and vexing and foiling, and as I feel many, so I fear more sorrows before I die, and then death and delusion, that at last I may be deceived. Nay, the agonies of hell many times assault me, and then I am put to a loss, that is it possible I should escape? Why, beloved, the Lord Jesus conquered death, and sin, and hell, and the grave, and Satan, with all the strength of darkness and delusion, and hath spoiled them. Col. ii. 14, 15. And now he is in heaven in his kingdom, triumphing over them, that they can not hurt him. Ay; but what is that to me? Why, this very victory is thine. Hence we are said to be dead with him, (Rom. vi. 8,) and risen with him, (Col. iii. 1;) nay, to sit in "heavenly places," as it were triumphing in him, in glory with him, (Eph. ii. 6;) nay, (Heb. x. 14,) "He hath by one offering perfected his people forever that are sanctified." It is true you may rejoice in that you

shall conquer; but O, remember this, it is done already in thy head and in thy husband.

4. Immutability and certainty of standing in a happy estate; for this is that which sads the heart, I shall fall at last. How is it possible but I should be so? No, beloved, look upon the Lord Jesus, in him thou art; if he can fall, if he can die, if he can be cast from the Father's face, then thou mayst. Believe "that I live, you shall live also." John xiv. 19. Adam, indeed, was chosen to be head of mankind, and as when he stood perfect, we stood; so (though mutably) he falling, we fall. So we are chosen in Christ, and as he stands unchangeably, so we stand; and as he was tempted every way, yet did not, could not fall, no more canst thou. So that, O that the Lord would give you hearts to learn this lesson, when there is nothing but want in thee. Do not shift so much for a little from the Lord, but see God's end and reach it. O, rejoice, glory in, and bless the Lord. This was Paul's life, and the life of the churches first planted. O, bless the Lord for all spiritual blessings in Christ! This will be joy in sorrow, life in death; this is golden faith, this will answer all fears. When Satan saith, Thou hast not this or that, nor canst not do this nor that, and to hell, therefore, thou must go; reply again, It is true, I have little, I am dead, but Christ lives forever; I may fall in myself, I never can fall in him; that which he hath is mine.

Object. It is true they may do this that know the Lord Jesus is theirs, but, alas! I know not that.

Ans. If you do not, you must wait then until the Lord make himself known unto you; but tell me, will you do this, if you did thus know it? It may be some of you have not done so, unless by force sometimes, and you will find it one of the toughest works of faith that is. What is a poor man better for another's wealth, and a sick man for another's health, and a naked man when others are clothed? Yet, beloved, by virtue of the power of faith, and our union to the Lord Jesus, a man is the better. A woman that is matched to a prince may have never a penny in her purse, and yet she rejoiceth in that her husband hath it. It is the secret nature of faith to make a man all one with Christ, in Christ, in that manner that I can not find such a union in the world; and hence his health, his clothes, his grace, his life, may be matter of as much joy as if a man had all this in himself. And because many a soul hath Christ, but feeling such emptiness in himself as that he can not think so, and it may be would do so if he saw whether he might do so or not. I shall therefore express my thoughts to them thus, in these particulars:—

1. That all that fullness that is in the Lord Jesus, it is not for himself, but for them that want it. John xvii. 19. He might have been blessed in his Father's bosom without thee. Why should he therefore live, and do, and suffer, and rise, and glorify his blessed nature, but for them that wanted this? He is filled with wisdom, life, strength, because men are blind, dead, weak.

2. But you will say all the world want it, and yet few in the world shall ever have any share there; therefore all them in the world that hunger after all that good that is in him, they may now, in the absence of it, content themselves with it, that there it is in him for them; for the Lord fills the hungry, and so hungry as it is not something or other that they pick out, but all Christ, and all of that that is in Christ. Now is the season to eat; if bread and hunger meet, now satisfy yourself. 2 Cor. xii. 9, Paul prayed, and the Lord denied; yet now the Lord bids him feed on his grace. So that, when thy heart asks, What hast thou to do with him when so vile? answer, Yet the Lord hath all, and I want him, and hunger after him. Take heed of despising his grace! If thou hast no hunger, the Lord be merciful to thee!

3. If you have so contented yourselves with him, as now you place all your felicity in him, to this end, to receive life from him, as a man satisfies himself with bread that he may have life. For as I would not damp the faith of the elect, no more would I patronize the sloth of the wicked. Many a man, it may be, may say, I have nothing in myself, and all is in Christ, and comfort himself there, and so fall asleep; hands off, and touch not this ark, lest the Lord slay thee. A Christ of clouts would serve your turn as well. Run not to this temple to make it a den of your thievish heart; no, do you so content, or will you so content yourselves with him, as to account yourselves happy here, that all the world is dung in respect of this; and this you do to suck and receive more from Christ, and so to be like him. Now, hold here, and live here, and rejoice here forever. Phil. iii. 9–11; Is. xii. 2, 3. *First.* "The Lord is my song and salvation;" therefore we will draw hence. If the Lord gives nothing, yet I have it in him; if he gives any thing, the honor shall be given to him. O, take this course; 1. Lest you lose Christ and all too; 2. Lest the Lord ever keep you short in a complaining condition; 3. That you may be every day and moment in heaven, and win the crown from every hypocrite who knows not what this life in Christ means; 4. That the Lord may be your glory, for he is not only the glory of God, but of his people Israel too; 5. That you may love yourselves the less, and the Lord the more.

Section V.

Use 2. Hence see a necessity of seeing and knowing Christ, before a man can believe, or if ever the soul believe; for if faith closes with the person of the Lord Jesus, the same faith must first see that person. If it takes the bridegroom himself, it must see and know him first. Did you ever see any espoused together that did not first see and know each other? The eye must first see. My meaning is, there must precede this act of the understanding, to see Christ, before a man can close with Christ by his will. For I aim not at this whether it goes before in time, but in order of nature it does precede, and absolutely necessary it is. Hence, (John vi. 40,) "He that seeth and believeth in the Son hath eternal life." This is so necessary to faith, that faith itself puts on this name. Is. liii. 11, "By his knowledge." Luke xix. 41, "O that thou hadst known!" Is. xlvi. 21, "Look unto me and be saved." And hence unbelief in Scripture is expressed by being blinded, (Rom. xi. 7, 8;) for though Christ be absent from us on earth, yet that is the excellency of faith, it makes things absent present, and sees unseen things; (Heb. xi. 1; John viii. 56,) "Abraham saw my day;" and that is the wonderment of saints; there is light in Goshen when all Egypt is dark, when others are blinded they see. Is. lx. 1, 2.

Quest. What is this knowledge or seeing of the Lord?

Ans. I make this question, partly because this is the first chief evangelical work, as it appears to us; nay, indeed, it is in a manner all; hence, (Matt. xi. 27,) "I thank thee thou hast hid these things," etc. If this be right, faith is right, etc.; and if this be not, a man's faith is but a fancy, and a man's sanctification and reformation, hopes, desires, are but the works of death and darkness, if this sun be not risen; and partly, also, because all the policy and power of Satan is to blind the eye here, for then he knows men will stumble at every step. 2 Cor. iv. 4. He will help to believe, and joy in believing, and reformation after that joy, that a man might content himself with this joy and faith, and look not after the sight of Christ. And if I was to leave the world, I should leave this to be thought of; as Christ told the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship whom ye know not," so men believe in whom they know not, and pray to one whom they know not, and depend on whom they see not, and hence do not wonder at an adulterous generation rising up, that deny all evidencing of a man's justification from his sanctification, and that it is but a fading thing, because they never felt what it meant, because they never knew what the Lord Jesus meant, and there-

fore listen to it. I say therefore, first, what this knowledge is not, for every man has some knowledge.

1. There is a knowledge of the Lord Jesus by report; the fame of a man may come where himself is not seen; so of Christ, there may be a fame spread of him, and of some excellences in him, where he is not savingly known, and this is not seeing of Christ; for a man may live and die a damned creature with this knowledge. The Samaritans had some knowledge by report of the Messiah. John iv. 25, "When he is come he will tell us all things;" so many among us hear that Christ is come, and risen, and glorified, and the Saviour of the world and of sinners, etc. But how come they to know this? By way of tradition and report only. I confess this knowledge may be a means in the elect to bring them to saving knowledge, as in the queen of Sheba that heard Solomon's fame, and the disciples. John i., "Come and see." But reprobates are not drawn by it, as Herod (Luke xxiii. 8) "heard many things of Christ," but never saw him till he came to judge him. So here, because they can live well without Christ, hence rest content with the bare report. Whereas they that had diseases heard of his fame, and came to see Jesus.

2. There is a knowledge of Christ from his works, as we know what trade and what artificers many men be, because these are external things, yet know not the man; so there is a knowledge of Christ by his works, that by him the worlds were made (Heb. i.) and all creatures governed, and a man may see him in his trading with others and himself; all comes from him, that a man may say the Lord has done all this, and that for me, and yet strangers to Christ. And if men be ignorant of him here, he may do such wonderful things before their eyes, that they can not but wonder and say, This is the Lord's work, and yet know him not. Matt. xi. 20. He upbraided the cities where most of his mighty works were done, but they saw him not. John xv. 24, "If I have not done," etc. The Lord may work strange temporal deliverances, that you may know all power is in Christ's hand to save and pardon, (Matt. viii. 27,) so as to marvel and not envy, "What manner of man is this that winds and seas obey him?" It is true, the saints do know the Lord, but they are not idle spectators and receivers of him; but O that I might have that Christ himself! They do him no good, give him no content without him; as he said, "What givest thou me if I go childless?" John ix. Christ had opened the blind man's eyes, and yet he cries, "Lord, who is he?" (verse 36–38;) whereas others see the works of Christ, and vanish;

or if affected, an evil spirit comes on them, as on Saul when he saw David's love.

3. There is a literal knowledge of the Lord Jesus by the bare letter only of the word, and it is wrought in this manner. A man doth not only take up the knowledge of Christ by report, nor from his works, but he hears, reads, is well catechised concerning Christ and all his offices and benefits, that there is much light let in; hence his mind, having those literal relations, guesseth at them, and conceives of them; and because the mind is carnal, it apprehends them in a carnal manner, (though it thinks it sees Christ truly.) Hence a man having a form of this knowledge in his head, he may be able to express much, and make a large confession of his faith, discourse of points of controversy in matters that concern Christ, and justification by Christ, etc., and instruct others, and yet having no more, know not, all this while, what the Lord Jesus is.

First. Because as he was a carnal Jew that had but the form of knowledge in the law, (Rom. ii. 20,) so he is but a carnal Christian that has but a form of knowledge in the gospel. The Jews were exceedingly versed in Scripture, and boasted they heard God, and saw God; Christ tells them they never heard his voice, nor saw his face, (John v. 36;) i. e., they only saw it literally, not savingly.

Secondly. This is but a carnal knowledge, which letter and fancy beget. 1 Cor. ii. 14, "He can not know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Thirdly. It is a dead knowledge, or will be dead and unsavory; and hence many that know much of Christ feed on their lusts and dunghill delights, because their knowledge feeds them not, fills them not, as fancies do not feed.

Fourthly. It is a false knowledge; for give a blind man a description of the sun, or a tasteless man of honey, he may set up a false image and deceive himself; and so doth this. Many set up a false image of Christ, and trust to that. Or, as in description of another country, when he sees it, then he sees he was deceived. So saints see they were deceived, and saw not Christ, nor sin, nor God, and so shall men in hell see; hence, (Is. vi. 9,) "In seeing they see not." How came that to pass? They did see, but saw not really.

Fifthly. It is such a knowledge as hinders from saving knowledge of Christ. John ix. 39, "I came that they that see might be made blind." The wise, learned Corinthians must become foolishness, and the light that is in thee is darkness. This light stands in your light; and yet this is the knowledge that thou-

sands content themselves withal, and hence catch hold on Christ, and think they have him, when, in truth, it is but the image and fancy of him.

Quest. What, then, is this knowledge or seeing of Christ?

Ans. There is a seeing of Christ after a man believes, which is Christ in his love, etc.; but I speak of that first light of him that precedes the second act of faith, and it is an intuitive or real sight of him as he is in his glory. Christ reveals his wonderful glory to the soul really, as *ex. gr.* A man hears sin to be the greatest evil, and sometimes conceives by argument how, but sees not the thing sin, though he sees the word sin. So a man that never traveled into foreign parts may hear, and read, and speak of countries; or, as herbalists read of the nature of plants and trees, yet never saw the things, nay, trample upon them when they see them; so it is one thing to read of the sun in a book, or to know it by revelation, another thing to know it by sight. This is therefore the saving knowledge of Christ, to see the Lord in his glory as he is; not perfectly, for that is in heaven. Hence we shall there see him, and be like unto him, but imperfectly, and in part; (2 Cor. iii. 18,) "Changed here into the same image." And this appears from these four grounds:—

1. That knowledge the saints have of Christ, it is not by bare word only, but also by the Spirit. The word relates Christ, but the Spirit is the interpreter of the word. The interpreter of heaven must interpret the language of heaven. Now, the Spirit ever shows us things as they are, even though they be deep things and mysteries, it makes them plain; (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10,) "As the sun when it ariseth it scatters all darkness, so when this day-star ariseth." Not that these things are revealed without the word; for, (2 Cor. ii. 14, and 2 Cor. iv. 4,) lest the light of the gospel should shine. It is by the word that the Spirit does enlighten.

2. Because the sight of the knowledge of Christ, it is as the knowledge of a thing in a glass. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Now, though you see not the man face to face, yet if you see him in a glass, there you see him as he is. *Quod videtur in speculo, non est imago*, as some think. A man may know another by relation or by some picture, but in a glass that is more full. The Jews they saw Christ, but it was under vails, and types, and pictures of him; this was obscure. Under the gospel the vail is pulled off, and with open face we see as in a "glass the glory of the Lord." In heaven, the glass is taken away, and then we see as we are seen.

3. Because that estate of the saints is translated into a state

of glory. Hence, when justified, then glorified. Hence, as that sanctification that is in the will is the beginning of the life of glory, so that light God puts into their mind is the beginning of the light of glory. Hence, as in heaven, the soul sees Christ by the full light of glory perfectly, face to face, so in this life the soul sees Christ really as he is, yet, as in a glass, imperfectly. Hence we are said to "see in part."

4. In regard of that abundant goodness and love of Christ to his people. Love can not lock up secrets. Joseph hid himself from his brethren for a time, but his bowels melt; he must tell them that he is Joseph. Christ may do so; but his love even constrains him afterward to let them see who he is. John xiv. 21. I confess its admirable love to reveal Christ in the word and letter of the gospel; to hear of him is happiness, and if the Lord saves you, you will think so too. But this is common to wicked men; there is a manifestation of himself as he is unto his people. And now he is in glory, hence reveals himself in his inconceivable glory, that now a man eyes the Lord, and such things he never thought of before, which eye never saw. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Quest. How doth the soul see him as he is?

Ans. I, in this case, rather desire to learn than teach, even from the meanest; yet what is obvious I shall suggest in this weighty business.

This seeing of him appears in three particulars.

1. True saving knowledge and sight of Christ consist in the sight of the glory of his person, especially now "caught up to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God, in all the glory of the Father." Look, as at the judgment day the Lord shall break out of heaven in such glory as shall amaze all the world, and all eyes shall see him, that he shall not only be admired in himself, but in all his saints, by all that are round about him. Just so doth the soul see him now, (though not by the eye of sense, yet by the eye of faith;) though not come to judge the world, yet now ruling of the world; though not in the clouds, yet in heaven; though his humanity only in heaven, yet his Godhead beams filling heaven and earth; though not yet coming in the Father's glory, yet sitting clothed with the Father's glory. For if a man looks on creatures, he sees God's footsteps of power; if on angels and saints, God's image of holiness; if on Christ, there God himself. 2 Cor. iv. 4–7. It is true, then, Christ's glory shall be seen by the wicked, but that is by sense, not by faith; that is only in their minds, but there is no shining into the heart, to the kindling of an infinite esteem of him. And this the god of this world hides from

people. Christ, the Lord of another world, in spite of Satan, reveals to his people. Before a man sees Christ, there is nothing more base than Christ, even to the elect, and then the ways and work of Christ. Jer. ii. 11, "Have any heathen changed their gods? These change their glory for that which doth not profit." Now, the Lord will be, must be esteemed of his people; hence will and does reveal this glory of his to his saints, whereas here others are blind.

2. In the beholding of the Lord as he comes and appears in the glory of his covenant; for when the Lord reveals himself so as to cause the soul to believe, and thereby to make it one of his people, he never makes any people, but by entering into covenant with them. Hence he ever appears in his covenant first. Is. xlix. *ult.* Look, as when the Lord made him a people at Mount Sinai, Moses came down from God, appears with tables in his hands, etc. So when Christ comes to make any his people, he comes as mediator of a better testament. Heb. vii. 22, "On Mount Sion." Heb. xii. 22, 24. Now, look, as it was with the Israelites, (2 Cor. iii.,) they had the covenant of Christ, and Christ revealed; but as Moses' face was covered, so theirs was, and Christ there was vailed over with the law, even the moral law, written in stone. Hence there was a vail on their hearts too; they could not see Christ, the end of the law, but only the vail, viz., the law; and hence looked for life by that, and hence were hardened against Christ. Rom. ix. 31, 32. So it is the misery and blindness of many people at this day; they see the Lord Jesus, but with his vail on. For people being not able to see and prize the glory of Christ immediately, the Lord appears with the law first, requiring this and that, and they endeavor to do it; and hence, if they can not, they comfort themselves with this, The Lord accepts my endeavors, not seeing the hypocrisy of them, or else they are never at peace, or very seldom. And why? Because they see not to the end of that which is abolished; never saw the end, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, therefore, when the Lord reveals himself, the Lord makes himself known without the vail; so that when conscience cries, you must do whatever is commanded or die; the Lord Jesus now comes and appears, and saith, Therefore see what need thou hast of me, who have fulfilled all righteousness, and done all. Receive me that have done it, and thou shalt live. O, but may I now live as I list? Am I now free from the law? No; it is to be thy rule and life in heaven; but "I will write my laws in thy heart, and cause thee to walk in my ways." Hence the soul sees all done for him: 1. In Christ; 2. All that he is to do for

Christ. He sees it not in means, nor in himself, but in the Lord's promise; and here faith hangs and has peace. For two things trouble: —

First. I have broke the first covenant of the law; Christ appears not as one that exacts the debt, but as one that comes to enrich him when poor.

Secondly. I can not walk after it as a rule; Christ appears in this covenant, and promiseth to cause him to do it; and hence, after all departings from the Lord, he will not depart farther by unbelief, but sees the end of the law, which is Christ, that in him they may perform the covenant, and by him be strengthened to walk with him as after a rule. For the covenant of grace is not, Christ will be righteousness to thee if thou wilt walk after the law as a rule, but Christ will do both; and this the soul sees in its glory, else it is no sight. Hence (2 Cor. iii.) gospel is called "the ministration of glory," which no carnal heart can see; for the vail is taken away when it turns to the Lord, and sees him. The saints only with open face behold this. It is true, for a time they may make of Christ a Moses; as Peter, (Luke v. 8,) "Lord, depart from me; I am a sinful man." And the Lord may deal roughly with them to humble them, as Joseph did to his brethren, but it will not ever hold; and the Lord appearing thus to them that have been stung by the law and that killing letter, now the Lord appears in ineffable beauty and glory. To others there is nothing in it; they may see this, yet not believe.

3. In seeing the Lord in the glory of his grace, or fitness for him, and this is the main. For look, as it is in marriage, there is a respect to beauty and feature, and that draws. Now, a woman sometimes appears to one so, that though her portion be great, etc., yet he can not like; another can, because God has a hand in it, and what fits the fancy, that is beauty; there is a suitableness every way. So Christ is presented with a rich portion to many, and yet they can not like, can not see a beauty, because they can not see a fitness and suitableness to them and for them. Another man can; because he sees fitness and suitableness in the Lord Jesus for him, in respect of his misery and sin, and his gracious disposition. John i. 14, "But we saw his glory — full of grace and truth." Ps. xlv. 2, "Thou art fairer than the children of men, full of grace are thy lips;" which is so beautiful in the Lord's eyes, that the Father hence exalts the Son, for all the grace he shows to his elect. Now, what makes Christ appear fit? *Ans.* The knowledge of a man's self and sense of vileness. Hence, (Luke vii. 29, 30,) "The Pharisees despised the counsel of God against themselves, when publicans

justified God," etc. And it is a rule, that the saving knowledge of Christ is dependent upon the sensible knowledge of a man's self. Let a Christian in Christ lie in his sins, and comfort himself in remission of them without repentance, he may talk of Christ, but no beauty will appear in Christ. So it is at first; the soul feels sin, and that God is holy, and will hate him; then the Lord shows Christ came to call such. Yea; but I have no good, and can not help myself. Christ appears fit to seek out such. O, but I can not see, nor believe, nor be affected; Christ appears one fit to do all, full of wisdom to perform the second covenant. O, but I want all things; Christ appears all-sufficient. O, but I shall fall; Christ appears constant in his love. O, but he is far to seek; Christ appears present. O, but I shall sin; Christ appears merciful to bear with and heal infirmities. O, but I shall believe too soon; he is fit to prepare and dispose. O, but all the world will be against me; Christ, therefore, appears fit to rule all for me. O, but death and grave may hurt me; Christ appears fit, who has conquered all, and this is ever in the saints. Now, lest you should think you have this when you have not, and know it not, see the evidences hereof.

1. If ever the Lord has thus revealed himself to thee, he has brought this light out of darkness, and made thee sensible of it. 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6. O, you that have been a little troubled, and then hear of Christ, and then depend on him, and wait for comfort from him, and now you are well. You never yet saw him. Nay, if truly enlightened, you will go mourning to your graves for your ignorance of him, (Prov. xxx. 2;) and seldom is your darkness seen and felt, but there is some beam let in.

2. It damps the glory of all the world, that a man lays down all at Christ's feet, as the wise men. Matt. ii. 'As glowworm stars go out when the light of the sun ariseth, so all the comforts and all the miseries of the world are nothing now; (Acts vii.) I see Jesus.

3. It makes a man very vile in his own eyes. Is. vi. 5. Nay, his excellency vile as Isaiah his tongue, and wonders that the Lord should look upon him, a worm, who is so glorious. "What am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" etc. He sees Christ fit, and then sees his glory, and then saith, "What, me, Lord?" me to stand before thee? Lord, depart; I am a sinful man!

4. It necessitates the heart to believe, not with assurance, but with a clinging to him. Hypocrites have knowledge of Christ, but it never heats the heart; this, as fire, necessarily heats, and that which is put to it is heated, so here; for the sight of the

last end doth necessitate when it is seen, (Is. lv. 4, 5;) "They shall run to thee, because God has glorified thee." Rom. i. 16, 17, it is the power of God, for there is righteousness revealed. That though the Lord bids depart, yet he can not be gone, nay, when he concludes, yet (as Jonah ii. 4) so he can see to a temple through the belly of a whale. Many say, May I believe? or I can not prize him! I tell you, when the Lord appears as he is, you can not resist that light, but you must cling to him.

5. Where this is, a man rests not here, but sees more and more of him. John i. 49, 50, a man sees now his glory, but after he shall see his love, and after that he shall know his mind, (1 Cor. ii. 9; Eph. i. 9,) "the mystery of his will." And then his constant presence, and all his walkings with him and toward him, so as to be familiar with him, that in time of old age he shall be an acquaintance of Christ's; (2 Cor. iii. 18,) "from glory to glory;" whereas a hypocrite's light goes out, or grows not. Hence many ancient standers take all their comfort from the first work, and droop when in old age. I know the saint's light is obscured, and the Lord hides his face, but then they are troubled, and it shall break out, "with healing in his wings." Nay, all their lifetime they may think they know him not, because they have not those measures. O, therefore, see a necessity of it.

1. You that are vile, and ignorant of Christ, no faith yet, no Christ yet. And what then? Thy sins are upon thee now, and woe to thee, for "the wrath to come." O, poor creature! thou dost not see, nor canst not see; if thou didst, thou wouldst not crucify the Lord of glory.

2. You that be professors of the church, O, deceive not yourselves! If the Lord has enlightened you, O, bless him! If Christ were here, he would bless you. Matt. xiii. 16. Nay, when he was here, he did it; he doth it in heaven. "I thank thee, Father," etc. Matt. xi. 25; Luke x. 21. But if not, all is unsound that ever you had. O, therefore, look you be not deceived here, and therefore wait upon the Lord to manifest himself! Who knows but the Lord may help? Nay, when you are feeling of the infinite need of it, and of your own woful blindness, it is begun.

Section VI.

Use 3. See the happiness of saints (all you standers by) and of all believers. You think what are they? What have they, that I have not? What get they by seeking, by mourning? They have the Lord himself; not kingdoms, nor heaven, not guard of angels, not pardon, nor comfort or grace only, but

which is greater, and than which there can be no greater, the Lord of glory himself. Is there any thing that is good there? It is theirs. I doubt not but angels stand amazed at this. What hast thou? Thou hast peace, and ease, and duties, and friends, but no Christ; then poor and cursed thou art.

Section VII.

Use 4. Hence learn to judge of your faith, whether it be of the right make or no; whether it be such a faith as will never fail you, but shall in deepest miseries, in sorest agonies, and most furious temptations, nay, in greatest sins and desertions, be indeed a friend unto you. Is it such a faith as pitches on, and closeth with, the person of Christ himself, and him alone? So that all the delights in creatures quiet thee not, unless thou canst find him through them; nay, no ordinances cheer thee, unless thou canst see him in them; nay, heaven itself will not content thee, but him in heaven, (Ps. lxxiii. 25;) and hence it is him thou seekest, him thou seest; it is him thou approvest thyself unto, and servest. So that it is this Rock of Ages thou trustest to. Is. xxvi. 3, 4. It is his strength thou art strong by, it is his life thou livest by, it is the Lord himself that thy faith fathoms. This is right, (1 Pet. ii. 7;) for now what good can the Father deny thee, when he has given a Son to thee? What hurt can Satan do thee by all his shakings, when thou hast the Son himself, this corner stone, this horn of salvation, to support thee? What hurt can the law do thee, when thou hast righteousness in a Son? What hurt can delusion do thee, when thou hast wisdom, ever plotting for thy good, in such a glorious head as the Son? What hurt can death do thee, or sin do thee, when thy life is in the Son? "O, lead me to the Rock," saith David, "that is higher than I!" O, here is a Rock higher than death, than grave, than sin, than Satan! Who can hurt thee now? But, O beloved, how many fall short of "entering into this rest," and closing with this person! And there are four sorts of them that spin the finest thread of deceit to themselves, that think they believe, when yet they have not the Son.

1. Those that do not close with himself, but only come to him for some righteousness out of himself, (for I shall not speak of them that forsake all, and follow Christ, for the bag and for the loaves,) for it is with all men living naturally as it is with men that have been rich shopkeepers, but now they are broke, and cast into great want: steal they will not, dig they can not, beg they know not how, turn apprentice to another they must not;

they have not been used to that life; hence they resolve to set up their trade again, though they sell but pins, and points, and small wares; and because they can not set up for themselves, they go unto merchants to help them, and run into their books on trust, and desire day and patience, and they will pay them all again. Now, it is not the man that they respect, but to make up their markets out of him. But, alas! they can not pay their debts, and hence to prison they go. So it is here: God set up Adam with a stock in his own hand; now he is broken, and cast into great want, and fears the arrest of God's displeasure. Now, sin men dare not, dig and help themselves they can not, and to beg and live upon the Lord and his alms they know not how; indeed, they will not; they are not used to this life; hence seek to set up their trade again, though in never so small duties; and because they can not help themselves, hence they go to Christ; not as to a husband, for himself, but as to a merchant, to set them up again. And truly Christ, for many ends, and to show his freeness to his own, gives many talents to such, which they receiving, hope to please the Lord by: when I can get the Lord to give me some more knowledge, brokenness, affections, enlargements, abilities to do, then I hope I shall please him; but either they spend all, and fall away to nothing, before they die, or else death comes and carries them captive to the judgment seat of God; and there they see they are run but the deeper in debt, and not able to pay. Thus it is with Papists, who profess that none of their own works save, but his works in us, and his blood meriting, that these shall save. Hence they trust not to what they do, but to what the Lord does, against which very faith the apostle disputes. Rom. iv. 5. Thus it was with the Jews; divers despised Christ, and sought a righteousness of their own; others cried, Lord, Lord, Lord, there be these sins that wring my conscience; ease me of them; here be these duties I must do, else never saved, and my heart is dead. O, affect me, and help me to do them; there be such works I am to perform, and have no strength to pray, to prophesy; Lord, assist me! Matt. vii. 21, 22, "Depart, I know you not;" never accepted of you; you thought these things would please me; you closed not with me. O, now depart from me, from my fellowship, my bosom, my presence! For this is ever their frame; they think to pacify God by what they do, and though they think his justice can not, yet they hope there is such indulgence in his mercy that he will accept. Thus it was, (Is. lviii. 2,) for this is their temper; they are not wounded with the want of Christ himself, but with some jarrings against the law, for which they

fear they must die. Hence, not seeing into the spiritual nature of the law, they are wounded, not slain, by the law; they hope they shall live, if they can leave such sins, perform such duties, feel such abilities. Now, having made trial at home, they go to Christ, and seek him with delight for to work this or that, and then they are well. Now, if they do not receive at present, then they hope by seeking to find in time. If he doth not help them, then they shall be well. Hence they ever live in some sin, and know it not, as these did, and as the young man. Matt. xix. And thus it is, as it is with two princes; one is in trouble by inroaders; he sends for aid to another, but doth not cast down his crown, and put himself in subjection to the other. So men will be kings, and hence send for aid against the inroads of some sin that stings conscience, but put not themselves under the Lord Jesus. Bring those mine enemies hither. Luke xix. 27. In one word, as the wound is, so is my closing with Christ. If one be in outward trouble, now to Christ he goes to deliver; if pressed with inward trouble for some sins, now to Christ to remove them, and so to pacify conscience; if with want of Christ himself, now he goes for himself.

2. Those that close with promises without Christ himself, and divide between them too, that strip Christ of these his swaddling-clouts, make their gain of these, and let himself go. I confess all a Christian's wealth is laid up in promises, not in words and syllables, for they are dead things, but Christ in them, and God's faithfulness in them. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 5. This is all my salvation, for all fullness is in Christ; he is rich, but what am I the better? Nay, the more miserable, for all emptiness is in me; therefore in the promise lies my peace. And this is a Christian's support in all troubles, and hence he casts anchor here; but here is his frame, he lays not hold on them without Christ, but by them goes to Christ, and there rests. John vi. 46, "He that has heard of the Father cometh unto me." Give children milk in the dish, they cry still; they must have it from the mother, and there suck; so 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. Now, there are others, that finding some work in themselves without Christ, and thinking that it is saving, and so a good sign, hence are mistaken, and close with it without Christ; and now they think it is well. I doubt not but the Jews that be devout comforted themselves with that promise, "He that confesseth," etc., (Prov. xxviii. 13,) not understanding of it; Matt. iii., "Say not within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father;" that promise kept them off from Christ. Matt. xxii. Some came not to the feast, some came, but without a wedding garment. It is with these men as

it is with men that come to buy wines; they taste them, and content themselves with a taste; another buys the thing; a saint doth so. Another tastes the sweet, and after falls to the unpardonable sin. Heb. vi. Or, as it is with a man that sees corn on the ground, he buys the field; another he gleans somewhat, and contents himself with that. There is, in one word, a double error:—

First. When a man shall close with Christ without promises, and hence seek to be seated without a promise. Hence, say some, you must not gather any evidence from any qualification you feel in yourself.

Secondly. When men shall snatch and nibble at promises and misapply them, not closing with Christ in them and by them. I have confessed my sin, and repented, and run away with this without Christ. O, time will come, the Lord will say, How camest thou in hither? What hast thou to do to take my promises into thy mouth, to arm thyself against Christ, by promises to make a spoil of Christ's grants, and let him be crucified? When Saul rent off Samuel's garment, he said, "The Lord shall rend," etc. 1 Sam. xv. 27, 28. The letter kills; all promises without Christ slay, because they keep the famishing soul from bread itself.

3. Those that close not with promises only, but with Christ himself, but it is only with the image and fancy of him, which, they think, is himself. In true faith, the Father reveals the Son as he is, or the Son reveals himself as he is, and faith hence closes with him as he is. John vi. 40. But some there be that hear of him, hence think what he is. Hence a carnal mind imagines of him as it imagines of a king in a far country, and falls down to his image, and trusts to it, and depends on it, and joys in it, until a man comes to be converted or die, and then he sees the deceit. Or if he did see him, yet he can see no beauty in him to desire him. There is many a man in this case that trusts to, and joys in Christ, whom, if he did know, he would loathe. John came preaching the gospel to show them Christ; they all came to him, and rejoiced in his light, but it was but for a season; for when he came to show them "there he is," (John i. 29,) not one man stirs when he shows them Christ, and verse 35, "only two;" and chap. iii. 32, "No man received his testimony." This is, beloved, the great sin and cause of all the rest, if they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Christ is not seen, hence not thought of, hence not esteemed, hence men boast not in him. Nay, it is the great plague, under means, that in seeing they see not. "Lord, how long?" You say, Christ is never so clearly true, but thou in seeing mayst not see; and if it be seen thus, then look for ruin.

Is. vi. 9–12. We say, Christians want not light, but life and affections. O, beg for light that will bring affections, else all affections will dry up, if not fed with this spring. John v. 37. What people had such means as they? yet they had not eyes to see.

4. Those that do not close with the bare fancy of Christ, but with himself; but it is not for himself and for his holiness, but only for his peace, and consolations, and joys. Like a sick woman that comes to the physician, not to marry her, but to heal her, cure her, and so comfort her. Or, if she doth come to marry him, it is only to satisfy her lust, or to save her from trouble, etc. In a word, they receive Christ, that he may give contentment to them, and not that hereby they may also give contentment unto him. They close with Christ to make them happy, not to make them holy; but they thus closing with him, think they have him, and hence rejoice exceedingly, and hence have a love to him, and hence have some kind of communion with him, and hence think they are espoused to him, and more familiar with him than others, and hence verily look with these "five foolish virgins," to embrace the bridegroom. That look as a saint, from a false apprehension of Christ, to be none of his, may be very sad, lose his joy, nay, his very love, in the act of it, nay, his communion and boldness to go to him, nay, his expectation of him; so from a false conceit that Christ is mine, *e contra*. Thus a man is grievously troubled with the sight of God's anger and with horror, and useth all means; at last he sees only Christ can do it, and hence seeks for and prizeth his love, (for his own ease;) for as horror may be his greatest evil, so love to ease him may be his greatest good. At last he is fully persuaded. How? By any work or word? No; but God has persuaded, and it is now sealed, hence joy. But now there is matter of more trouble, holiness and close walking with Christ; this is troublesome. He cares not for Christ to help him here, but deviseth how to keep Christ and joy without holiness. Hence let a world of sin lie upon them, they be not troubled with that; they look up to Christ. Or, if they see and be troubled at it, they take it as a burden, not as the greatest burden. Hence, say men, you must not judge of your estate by any thing or qualification you feel in yourself, for these may fail your eyesight in misty times; but we must follow it then, and not rest till we see and find it; for "without holiness no man shall see God." Hence also, let there be never so many falls, yet, say they, never call your state into question: hence they profess, we can not move till we be moved, and if I do not, it is not my fault. Hence, if ministers do preach any things

which are not about the person of Christ, or the excellency of a Christian in Christ, or the emptiness of the creature to prepare for Christ, (which are, indeed, of great use,) and press to any work or service of Christ, they are legal preachers, and bring people under a covenant of works. Whereas, if we preach duties, and leave them as signs, before being in Christ, they are so; but here to preach any duty of the law is part of the sweet will of Christ. Tell us (say they) what we should do. What can a man do? "He can do all things through Christ." True, but Christ must come to act it. Yea, but he has a faith to fetch it. 1 John i. 6. Many said they had communion with him. 1 John ii. 3, 4. It seems, they said "they had no sin;" as now some say, God sees no sin in justified people, God looks to the new creature only; it is not I, but sin. If the Spirit help not, it is not my fault. Not many days since it did lie upon the spirit of one, who seeing Christ has undertaken all, closed with him, rejoiced in him, not for this end, not from the beauty they saw in holiness, nor bitterness of sinfulness, but because they would be eased of the work. I have known them that have lived in some sin, and promised the Lord shall be blessed if he save them in their sin, and conceiting he would have loved him; thus these. In a word, the soul of man desires rest and peace, seeks for it in creatures, seeks to satisfy itself there; there it can not; hence seeks for it (as many dying men do) in Christ, not in the grace, but in the joy of Christ; not in Christ's holy presence, but in his comforting presence; seeking the utmost perfection of a Christian in the seal of the Spirit, not in the mighty actings of the Spirit for God. Hence he is deluded, and fancies he has Christ, and hence joy. Sin is the great evil; hence the end of Christ's coming is to take it away. Hence, if a man close with Christ to remove horror, not sin, and so has not closed with him for his holiness, you never closed with Christ for the end of his coming, nor for his, but only for your own ends; and so it is not him, but his. 2 Cor. ii. 15. The gospel is "a savor to them that perish," if of death to death. O, consider of these things if it be not thus. 1 John v. 11, 12. Hast thou the Son for thy portion? Dost thou see his glory full of grace to accept and sanctify thee, thou hast life. If not the Son, but only something from him, O, death, and not life! The bonds of death, not life, are upon thee, which no creature can unloose, unless the Lord come to thy grave-side and unloose thee.

Section VIII.

Use 5. Of Exhort. To close with the person of the Lord Jesus. You will think this is not a right course thus to do. We can not do it. *Ans.* Yet the gospel has commands and entreaties wherewith Christ's Spirit goes to the elect, and if you could see Christ in the ministry of man, you should feel it, and hence we look it should be so. And, besides, saints that have faith and power are quickened by the voice of the Son of God. Consider, therefore,—

1. All men are fallen into a bottomless gulf of misery and sin, though once righteous. Hence God's truth having said, "He that sins shall die." Hence justice comes out to do execution, and when the neck of all men thus lies on the block, yet mercy pities, and saith, O, spare, save! Satisfy me, saith justice, then I will. Hence mercy sends forth a Son, when no men nor angels could help; and he takes flesh, takes all their sin, fulfills all righteousness, bears their sorrows, and by "one offering perfects forever them that are sanctified;" and, having done this, is now at the right hand of God in the glory of his Father, all creatures subject to him, all excellencies being met together in him. So that now he is the delight of God, the joy of heaven; so that whatsoever thou canst want, or losest, if thou hadst him, thou shalt find it in him; and also whatever he can do for thee, in his time thou shalt receive it from him. Deut. xxxiii. 26, 29, "Who is like the God of Jeshurun?"

2. Now, there is a universal offer to all people where the gospel comes. Enemies are entreated to be reconciled; for though he has not died for all, yet now being King, such is his excellency, that he is worthy of all. Hence commands all to receive him; and if this be a condemning sin to reject him, it is then a command lies upon you to receive him, and the foundation of this offer is your wants and miseries. You are dead, O, come to him, therefore, for life; weak, guilty, blind, O, therefore, come to him for pardon, peace, and life. Not fullness, nothing but emptiness is the ground of this offer. Jer. iii. 22.

3. Hence there is nothing on God's part, nor yet on your part, that can keep you from him. No sins, no wants, unless it be your will. Matt. xxiii. 37. Therefore, now, whoever will shall have him, let him take him. Rev. xxii. 17. There be two acts of the will, election and resolution; I must have him, which, if you will, nothing that ever thou didst or canst do can please the Father so much; so that he will, 1. Adopt thee to be his son. John i. 12. As *e contra*. 2. Thou shalt enrich thyself with a

greater blessing than if heaven and earth and all glory was put into thy hand, as the Lord himself is better than all; and hence once thine, ever thine; none shall pull thee out of his hand. 2 Pet. i. 5. And it shall rejoice the heart of Christ himself in heaven, when, as his bride, thou givest to him thy good will. Is. lxii. 5. And if you do not kiss the Son, he will be angry. Ps. ii. And God knows whether now the last word, the last offer, is to be made to thee.

Object. 2. But I find such sins in me, that, till they are gone, I dare not.

Ans. Then you will first remove sin, and after receive Christ. First be your own saviours, and then make him another; you shall never do it. O, close with him to take sin away; because sick, therefore receive him.

Object. 2. But I have no will; my heart is endeared to my sin.

Ans. Therefore resign up thyself to him to give thee a will, (put it into his hand, as bad as it is; this is spouse-like,) and to take away that will to sin, so thou shalt have him; "I am my beloved's, he is mine." For the Father looks to the law, and saith, Sinner, if thou believe, thou shalt be saved. Now, lie under the Spirit, and you are where you should be; resist here, you resist the Holy Ghost. O, but sin is dear. Consider, 1. What good did it ever do thee? 2. Has Christ shed his blood, or no? If not, O, the wrath of God is to come. If he has, O, wilt thou offer this wrong to his blood, that a lust shall be dearer than it; thy bloody knives dearer than the life, and death, and mercy of a Son? O, therefore, if any soul has any lust dear, I beseech you, by all the bitter sorrows of Christ, not to reject so great salvation.

Object. 3. But must I receive Christ with my own strength?

Ans. No, you can not, nor ought not; but if the Lord puts strength in thee, put it forth. Many followed Christ for loaves, but none that ever came to him for himself that ever he put away. Ps. lxxxi. 11–13, "I showed much love, but they would none of me. O that they had hearkened!" At this instant, God may give thee a heart.

Object. 4. But I shall never get my sins removed that I feel, which, I think, can not stand with grace.

Ans. God's promise and reason is cross to thy fears. If a son, all things also, though many years hence. Rom. viii. 32. If not by receiving, is it by rejecting that thou shalt attain thy end? It is true, thou hast fallen off by thy sin from Christ, because thy falls have made thee fall off by unbelief from him, and made thee say, Either I do not believe, or the Lord intends

no good to me. You have had no strength, because not satisfied with meat.

Object. 5. But I may presume.

Ans. Is it presumption to honor Christ, and to have him honored in thee? No. Dost thou think, if the Lord shall, after all thy sins, and in the midst of all thy miseries, give thee Christ, shall he not be honored by this? Yes; who can ever have such cause to love him as I? Shall not thy receiving of him by faith honor him? Yes. Rom. iv. 20. Canst thou dishonor him so much as by rejecting him? When he has laid down his life, showed his love, offers himself; now to reject him, it is to offer greatest contempt to him and his love that can be. Hence can you honor him so much as by this? Do never so much without him, he is unsatisfied; do this, he is well pleased. Nay, after all thy sins, yet he saith, "Return to me." Nay, nothing else is such a means to honor him, by doing for him. If so, grant thou art vile, unworthy, poor, yet for the honor of the Lord Jesus do it, who is but little honored in the world, and stand out no longer. Thus receive him, and then know it, you are sons, and rejoice in it, and do it now, while the Spirit is upon thee, and remember now not to change. Jer. ii. 11. As women, O, I would not change. See how happy are thy joys. But, Lord, who has believed our report?

Quest. How may the soul come to close with the person of the Lord Jesus?

Ans. 1. Before any man close, i. e., see and say he doth close with the Lord as his own, he must feel a want of the Lord and his presence, not only of his comforting, but of his holy presence; for some people there be that never felt a want of Christ at all; they are great and grievous sinners, but they trust to Christ, and though he kill them, yet they will trust to him; others are in misery, and they feel a want of redemption, and hence close with Christ for that. Ps. lxxvii. 35. Others are in horror, and know not what to do, and they feel a want of the comforts of Christ, and hence close with Christ for that; and if they find it, they depart from Christ by looseness of life, if not by despair of heart, as Saul. 1 Sam. xxviii., "God answers me not by Urim," etc. Others feel a want of some righteousness from Christ, the having of which supports and sustains them without Christ, till with the prodigal, when all is spent, then they think of bread at home, and the want of which makes them to have less esteem of, and desire after, Christ, but they are full of objections against the thoughts of closing with him, but hence they close with Christ for that. Others there are that feel a want

of the Lord himself, and hence close with him for himself; so that let a man have all blessings in the world, the purity of ordinances, never so many elapses, and droppings of divine light, and life and comfort in these ordinances, that he wonders the Lord should be so good to him, yet he shall find (if right) his soul secretly unquiet and unsatisfied till he has the Lord himself. As the savor of meat makes a man that wants it cry the more after it, long the more for it, so the savor and sweet of all creatures, all ordinances, all duties, do not stay, but stir up the soul to seek Christ when he is himself. Jer. l. 4, "They shall seek the Lord weeping." Hence first they felt a want of him. "The full soul loathes the honeycomb." Let the Lord be never so sweet, let him do them never so much good, the more good he doth them, the less they regard him. Jer. ii. 6, "They said not, Where is the Lord?" Therefore that soul that truly closeth with the Lord must first feel a want of the Lord, and say these ordinances are not bread, these creatures are not bread, all these parts, gifts, duties are not bread; bran, not bread. All this savor, this sweetness, it is not bread. Hence I perish for want of bread. I have creatures, ordinances, affections, comforts, duties, but, O, no Christ. Like the prodigal. Luke xv. 17. O, therefore, do not only see, but feel, the want of the Lord Jesus, you that never had him yet; nay, you that have him, you can not have more of him, but by feeling more the want of him. O, it was a marvelous expression of Moses, when the Lord began to be weary of their company, (Exod. xxxiii. 15,) "If thou goest not with us, carry us not up hence;" i. e., let us rather die than live without thee. Mary, when Christ was crucified, the carcass of the Lord was gone, she sat there weeping; O, much more for the Lord himself. It is observed by some for the saddest spectacle, to see a desert town. O, what is it to see a desert heart, where no Christ inhabits? Or a city, and no inhabitants? And hence it is Rome's curse to be made "a habitation of devils;" so here. What is hell but this, to see not Abraham, but to see Christ afar off, and thyself shut out? It may be it is no sorrow now, but it will be. It is a sad thing to see a man "rise up early, go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness," and yet gain nothing. Phil. i. 21. This is very sad. Christ is our gain; all the creatures you have, means you use, duties you do, comforts you receive, they are not gain; nay, the more God does for thee, the more thou losest, if no Christ, because now thou art full by this means. O, therefore, get a heart sensible of the want of the Lord. Think there is a Christ, whose glory is the amazement of heaven, but, O, I see him not. Happy forever are they that have him; but, O, I have him not.

Your hungry bellies can not want bread; if they do, they are never quiet till they have it. Is the Lord no better? Lord, grant this contempt be not revenged with spiritual plagues! Some of you know not your want, others feel it not, you can live without him; worse than Saul, he went to Urim, and lamented in great distress, "He answers me not!" O, you feel no distress, because of this, I have him not! Nay, worse than Dives, that begged, O, a drop of "water to cool my tongue"! Why cry not you, O, the Lord Christ to comfort my heart! Why is not all this fullness longed for? O, therefore, let nothing else comfort, and let nothing discourage, but make this use of all, O, I want him.

2. To the right closing with his person, this is also required, to taste the bitterness of sin, as the greatest evil; else a man will never close with Christ, for his holiness in him, and from him as the greatest good. For we told you that that is the right closing with Christ for himself, when it is for his holiness. For ask a whorish heart what beauty he sees in the person of Christ, he will, after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteousness, all his works, see a beauty in them, because they do serve his turn to comfort him only. Ask a virgin, he will see his happiness in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable, is his holiness, which is in him, to make him holy too; as in marriage, it is personal beauty draws the heart. And hence I have thought it reason, that he loves brethren, for a little grace will love Christ much more. Hence, if a man feels not the want of Christ, the bitterness of sin, as his greatest evil, he will never see nor admire Christ's beauty, much less close with it. Hence, (John xvi. 9,) "convinceth the world of sin, because they believe not in me," i. e., of that chiefly. "O, these wrongs done against the Lord!" Why not of wrath and hell? O, sin is the evil, and then it appears exceeding evil, when not against God simply, but against a Son. "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts ix. Why? Did he not give in lusts and self-confidence? Yes, but in all these he saw he persecuted Christ. And after saddest search, I have feared the want of this is the great cause of all a man's closing amiss with Christ. I would but ask, Where was Judas's wound? Was it resting in a Pharisaical righteousness without Christ? Without Christ; no, for he forsook all and followed Christ. Was it want of profession of him, preaching for him? No. Was it for want of communion with him? No: one sin he lived in, he had his bag. And hence, when many went from him, he stuck to him. John vi. Judas still cleaves to him; yet even then Christ calls him a devil, which, if ever he had

tasted the bitterness of, he would not have lived in, nor died desperately, some think unpardonably, without Christ, and so sin more against him. Let any man living show me how he can close with Christ, and yet love one sin. I will be his bondman, that can say, I close with Christ as my husband, and yet I love my whore too. Let any man living close with Christ, and keep his sin, or hide his sin, or let it be hid, his closing with Christ will harden him in his sin, and so he shall die without Christ in his sins, as it is writ. Exod. xxi. 24. As it was with Joab, who fled to the horns of the altar, so it is with many men; they sin, and confess, and sin under all laws. Why? They fly to Christ, and this emboldens them, hardens them. Why? Because they never tasted the bitterness of sin. I know a man's sin may be crucified before it is mortified, as it may be buried after it is dead. O, therefore, I beseech you, look to this, you fail not here. Many of you are troubled; O, take heed of being comforted until you get the Lord to do this for you, or unless you depend upon the Lord for this in his time. Some apply comfort when they see no good. I dare not to myself or others. O, therefore, imagine thou didst hear the Lord speaking, Why dost thou persecute me? Why is a man so grieved at any thing that crosses himself? Because a man loves himself, because he thinks his good lies there most. O, see thy good more in Christ than in thyself. Acts ix. 4. O me! me in whom all good is! O, to persecute him! Two men here, and one is in horror and the other not. O, it is because God sets it on. So here.

3. Make the Lord Jesus present with you, and see him really before you, and see him willing to give himself unto you, even to thee in particular. Those that give themselves in marriage separate themselves from all company, and get alone together, and give themselves one unto another; so sever thyself from all the world, and set the Lord really before thee, as David, (Ps. xvi. 8,) and so close one with another. For two things keep from Christ. Either, —

First. They care not for him, and the cause is, they make him not present, only have a notion and report of him.

Secondly. They dare not close with him, because they fear he is not willing to close with them, with others, not with me. So that all the Scriptures they read, all the promises they hear, are very sweet, but they look on them as spoken to others. Hence, (Acts ii. 39,) "For the promise is made to you, and to them afar off." Be thou never so far off, if thou receivest him, he will receive thee. Luke ii. 14, "Good will to men." O, see this good will in the Lord to have thee receive him, though thou

hast no money, nay, because dead and vile, nay, because not sensible. Rev. iii. 17, 18. O, wonderful! Because senseless of misery, therefore close with him. 1. Is it not his command it should be so? 2. Is it not a sin to reject him? Will he not be angry with thee to reject him? 3. Are not his conditions easy, so as he has undertaken to do all that which thou sayest thou canst not? Why wilt not? 1. O, if I were a child, a son in covenant, I would; but, because otherwise, hence I dare not. *Ans.* John i. 12. Receive him; he will make thee a son. 2. O, but my wants are many. *Ans.* Receive him; he will make thee rich. Is. lv. 1–3. O, but I find my heart endeared to creatures. *Ans.* 1 John v. 4, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." 4. O, but I shall fall back. *Ans.* No. Jer. iii. 22, "Return, and he will heal thy backsliding." 5. O, but I shall never be able to do any thing. *Ans.* Yes; close with him, and thou shalt. 6. O, but I am very vile before the Lord after all I do. *Ans.* Yet (Eph. v. 25–27) he will make thee amiable; only receive him, set thy heart on him alone. Now, do you think he bears a good will toward you? Can you deny it? Shall not this overcome thee, that the Lord of glory should fall in love with thee, and bear good will to thee, a leper, and that canst do nothing for him, and yet for all this? O, this will draw thee! Ps. xxxvi. 6, 7, "O, how great is thy loving kindness!" This makes a heart of steel to yield. Jer. xxxi. 1–3. O, this will cut you in hell; O, hard hearts that despised such grace.

4. If the serious thoughts of this do not draw thee, at least not so fully, look up to the Lord to reveal himself unto thee, to be thine. For, as no man can take Christ until God gives him, so no man can say he is his, until the Lord shows him that he is his. And as the creature can not resist, but take when the Lord gives, so it can not but see the Lord when he reveals himself as indeed he is. And look to see him to be yours by some promise; for there is a seeing Christ, mine is great *fulgor* without the light of a promise, and spirit in it. Is Christ yours? Yes, I see it. How? by any word or promise? No, this is a delusion. The other is by promise, and that opened in the gospel. Eph. i. 13, 14. He saith not in whom, after ye were sealed, you believed, but *e contra*. And how believed? By hearing the gospel. Hence saints return to this. Ps. li. 8. "Let me hear the voice." 1 Pet. ii. 1–3. And this is that which has knit the hearts of saints to Christ forever, "O, thou hast the words of life." For there is a voice of love to the saints engraven in all mercies, in all afflictions, in all God's leadings of them, though

it be in a wilderness; but, beloved, only the Word can tell me the meaning of these words of love. So there is love of Christ revealed according to a promise, not by it, and love spoken in mercies, but the Word interprets them and clears them to be no delusions; I mean the Spirit there. This is judged to be a good answer to Papists, Who shall be judge of controversies? We answer, that which shall be judge at the last day must be judge now; but so, Rom. ii. 16; John xii. 48. So whether does God's Spirit seal, or the devil delude? It is a great controversy if you have not a word to see God's love by, but think you have a way to see it without; this Word shall judge you. O, look, therefore, for the Lord by a word to do it, and say, "Speak, Lord;" and if by word, look not for it without a work on your own heart. Some Christians have rested with a work without Christ, which is abominable; but after a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is first not to judge from a word. For though there is a word which may give a man dependence on Christ, without feeling any work, nay, when he feels none, as absolute promises, yet no word giving assurance, but that which is made to some work; "He that believeth, or is poor in spirit," etc., till that work is seen, has no assurance from that promise. Tell him God has promised to pour "clean water." Ezek. xxxvi. Yes, for some, not for me. *Secondly.* It is not to judge by the Spirit, for the apostle makes the earnest of the Spirit to be the seal; now earnest is part of the money bargained for, the beginning of heaven, of the light and life of it. He that sees not the Lord is his by that, sees no God his at all. O, therefore, do not look for a Spirit without a word to reveal, nor a word to reveal without seeing and feeling of some work first. I thank the Lord I do but pity those that think otherwise. If a sheep of Christ, O, wander not. *Object.* But I have waited long for this. *Ans.* True; therefore more need to wait still; it may be now it is not far off. *Object.* O, but it may be he will not, if I knew that I could be quiet. *Ans.* Down, proud heart. O, take heed of that pride; art not worthy never to hear a voice from God? Be silent, then, and humble, and now hear what the Lord will say; he speaks in a still voice. Ps. lxxxv. 8. Do as they in that psalm did: thou hast done thus and thus; O, hear us, turn us, and then lie still and listen. O, do thus, else you make God a liar if the word comes, (1 John v. 10, 11,) and when thou hast him, O, change him not.

First. What dost want, and where wilt go to find, is but there; any creatures, and all the excellencies of them, are there, and in time of trouble he will be instead of all, and also bless all.

Secondly. Dost want grace to honor a God? it is in him the fullness of it. Dost want God and his love? thou hast him, and now all his love, his care, his wisdom is thine. O, wonder at thy lot and portion, and say, Lord, I have enough. Thus much of the first doctrine.

CHAPTER XI.

SHOWING THAT TRUE BELIEVERS DO WITH HOPE EXPECT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

SECTION I.

Now, they go forth by *Hope* and *Desire* of him and his coming.

Observ. 2. That the church and people of God, after they are truly espoused to Christ, and made in any measure ready for Christ, they now are no more of this world, but look out of it, and verily expect the second coming, and glorious appearing of Christ.

It is true, they look for his coming and company at the last period of their life, but this they look upon but as their welcome in the way, until the last trumpet shall blow, and that they shall meet the Lord in the clouds coming in the air, (1 Thess. iv. 18,) which is the last and chief time of coming they look out for. The five wise virgins did here verily look for him; the five foolish seemingly did so too. That look as it was before the first coming of Christ, all their thoughts and searchings of heart were after the day, and time, and glory of it. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. And the nearer his coming was, the more ardently was he expected. Hence such flocking to John's ministry. Hence Simeon waited long for the "consolation of Israel." So the espoused and beloved of the Lord look out for his coming now. He has left them as orphans in this world. He has divers of his elect yet to bring home, and enemies to put under his feet, and then they know he will come, and this day they look for; as Christ expects it. Heb. x. 13. By the same Spirit they look for it.

This is that which Christ so oft presses on his disciples, foreseeing the slumbers of the world, to be ever watching for his second coming, and hence these alone are accounted blessed. Luke xii. 37, 38. That let Christ come at any watch, O, blessed! The duration of the world from the first to the second coming is but as it were a night divided into several watches; the saints are the watchmen of the world, who, you know, look for daylight;

though it be long, it is but a night; it will be morning. All the rest are like birds at their chaff. And hence he tells them the reason of the uncertainty of his coming, makes this the end of it. They are evangelical commands with which there goes a power. Look through all the primitive church in the golden age, they had all this stamp. 1 Cor. i. 7, "Waiting." 1 Thess. i. 10, "To wait for Christ from heaven." Nay, Heb. ix. 28, He professeth those only may know the fruit of his first coming, that "now look for him."

Section II.

Reason 1. Because they really foresee and see such a day. 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4, "In the last days shall come scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? All things are as they were;" and hence live in their lusts, die in their own dung, and never look for it. But these foresee it really, and hence look for it. Men that live on land, and love the smoke of their own chimneys, never look out to other coasts and countries, or to a strange land; but seamen that are bound for a voyage, and have a pilot with them that has seen the coast, that is it they look for; so men that live in this world, and are well here, look not after Christ nor his coming; but they have a pilot, a Spirit to show them, this day, this coast, and are bound for another world; they look out for this, they see it two ways.

1. By the eye of faith in the promise, (2 Pet. iii. 13;) and this makes the soul see it when all things seem to be against it, and hence expects it; for that is the difference between faith and hope. Faith closes with Christ, and all the glory of Christ, in the promises, as present; hope hence steps forth, and lays hold upon the performance itself, as absent. Faith entertains the promise as a faithful messenger, and sees that this message is true; hope runs out of doors, and leaves it with faith, and looks for the Lord himself. Heb. xi. 1.

2. By the light of glory in the thing itself; for saints do not only see things in letters and syllables and words, but see things as they are in themselves. The wicked see the word, sin, and Christ, and heaven, (and in seeing see not,) but not the things themselves. Now, the glorious coming of Christ being a thing to come, yet to be done, how do they see it but by report? Yes; they have the Spirit of glory, which Spirit "shows them things to come, (John xvi. 13,) which eye hath not seen." That look, as their head Christ sees this day as it shall be, and his apprehensions are not false, but as he conceives of this day so shall it

be; so the saints, by the same Spirit, see it before it comes, and are not mistaken about it, though it be very darkly, yet sometimes, when the Spirit of God is not overclouded, they see it more evidently. For this is the great plague of the wicked, they see nothing as it is, and in hell they see how they have been deceived. So this is the happiness of saints, that though they see things darkly, yet they see things truly, the Spirit creating glorious impressions on the mind of things as they are. They know things that the eye sees not as they are. That look, as Abraham (John viii. 56) "saw Christ's day and was glad," though afar off, so the saints, by the same Spirit. Now, why did Noah make his ark, and look for a flood? Because he saw it really. Did not others? No; it is said "they knew not." Matt. xxiv. 38, 39. Never knew "till the flood came." The Lord made it not known. Noah did, the other did not. Hence the saints can not but look for it.

Reason 2. Because they see nothing else in this world worth looking after; no, not for the present. For if a man sees the day of the Lord, yet has some prey in his eye, in this world, and his game before him, he will follow his hunting to catch his venison, though he comes too late for the blessing. But the Lord makes his people to see nothing in the world worth the hawking or catching.

1. They see the glory of another day, another world, and this puts out the glory of this, and hence makes them look for that; and hence, when Christ would comfort his disciples, he promises nothing here, but tells them, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place, and I will come to you again." John xiv. 1–3. And hence they, seeing this to be enough, look for this.

2. They see an end of all these things, of all the glory of them, and that these summer swallows will take their wings, and fly away in greatest extremities. Hence they look to eternal things, the Lord and his coming. 2 Cor. iv. 18, "We look not at temporal things."

3. They find the Lord crossing them of what they look for in this world, sometimes of outward comforts, and sometimes of the performance of spiritual promises. And when God thus "hedgeth their way with thorns," then they "think of their first husband." Look as it was with Abraham. Heb. xi. 13. You know strangers, when their way is uncomfortable, ever and anon look for their home. Abraham was heir of the world, yet he sojourns as a stranger in it, in tents, "because he looks for a city." Verse 10. So here, saints are the heirs of all creatures, yet the Lord

makes them strangers here, and hence they look for something else. The things God has promised to his people are very great, but not accomplished. Why? Because full accomplishment is left till the last day, that hope may wait, and that we may live by faith. God has promised to "take away all tears." O, welcome that day! This world can not do it, and the Lord here will not. 1 Cor. xv. 19, "If our hope were only here, we were most miserable."

Reason 3. Because they see and are sensible of their deliverance from wrath to come. There has been much wrath in the world seen, but yet the great wrath is to come. What that is they see; what their escape from it is they see. Hence they look for Christ, when he shall appear like the rising sun, and like a bridegroom from his chamber to comfort them. 1 Thess. i. 10. For the devils look for this day, and natural men; but seeing wrath, wish themselves under rocks and mountains, and seek to smother it; but saints, seeing themselves delivered, hence calmly look for it. The sense of this love makes them say, O, when will he come, that I may "see him with these eyes"! They fear not (for why should they?) the terror of this day.

Reason 4. Because the Lord has given unto them the first fruits of glory, and of that day of glory; hence they look and wait for it. You know the first fruits were part of the whole vintage; hence they gave thanks for all, because they then looked for all. Exod. xxiii. Rom. viii. 23, "We, having the first fruits of the Spirit, wait for the adoption." Look as it is with the wicked, that have rejected Christ and counted his blood a common thing, and done despite to God's Spirit, there remains nothing "but a fearful looking for of vengeance;" so here *e contra*. Rom. v. 1–5, "Being justified by faith," now, 1. "Peace with God;" 2. Access by Christ to God; 3. Standing in that grace; 4. Shedding of love, hence not only hope, but "glory in hope of the glory of God." There is none espoused to Christ but taste this love, feel the warmth of his fellowship, feel the abundance of his love, but it is but in a little measure, in the first fruits; hence they look for and expect the rest at his coming. They are sometimes full of fears — What if shut out at last? But when they feel the first fruits of glory at that day, now they verily look for his coming. Christ died, we know; but it was not possible for him to be held long, and hence rose again, and then looked for glory, and then was taken up to glory. So here; the saints lie dead in the grave of sins and fears; but it is not possible for them ever to be held here; hence, when "risen with Christ," they look upon "things above," and are

waiting for glory, and at last are taken to glory with himself. Look as Jacob (Gen. xlix. 18) said, "My soul waiteth for thy salvation;" when the stakes and pins of this fleshly tabernacle are loosing. So the Lord is loosing him from the excellency of this world; though he minds other things, yet he recalls himself —"My soul waiteth for thy salvation, O Lord."

Section III.

Use 1. Hence let all flesh take notice that there is such a time and day and coming of the Lord Jesus. This was the apostle's argument to prove a resurrection, "Christ is risen;" and to prove this, and so a resurrection from the dead at Christ's coming, "else your faith is vain;" i. e., expectation of him vain. 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. Men think it easy to believe a resurrection and a second coming of Christ for that end; but a hoverly slight work is quickly done, and a hoverly faith is quickly wrought. But when a man comes to look considerably, is there such a day indeed? Is there now in the third heavens that will fire this whole world, and gather his saints to his glory? Now, it is very hard. It is usual with Satan to pierce with extremities, that when they do begin, indeed, to close with Christ, and receive comfort from him, to smite them with thoughts. Is there a Christ, and is there such a time of coming? Now, of all the arguments to convince and persuade, methinks there is none like this, viz.: That there be a generation of men in the world that verily look for this day and see it, and have the first fruits and beginnings of it already in their souls. A number of people that once never minded it; heard of it, but looked not for it; now to see it; flesh and blood could not, Satan would not reveal it; hence God, that can not lie, has shown it unto them, so as they are in a manner eye-witnesses of it; men will believe eye-witnesses of any thing, especially if many. Such are the espoused of the Lord in all ages. "The things which we have heard and seen we speak."

Object. But may they not be deceived, and conceit that which is not?

Ans. True; but divine revelation of any truth, that can not deceive; for this is no fancy of the head, nor delusion of Satan. Now, this is a secret the Spirit makes known.

1. In that it fills the mind and feeds the heart with it, that it carries unto God with wonderment of blessing him that ever he saw this. Fancies can not feed, especially in greatest agonies. Now, they choose misery on this ground, rather than present peace here. Heb. xi. 35, "Not accepting deliverance."

2. In that it works effects cross to nature; nay, to all a man's lusts in them. Noah foresaw a flood nigh, but he might be deceived. No; it is said "he feared," kept close to God, and it came; so here.

3. This light whereby they see is not only sweet and glorious, and cross to heart and lusts, but it is sudden, as with Paul, when going to persecute; "suddenly there fell a great light," and so he saw Christ. So when a man goes on in his sin, and suddenly the Lord reveals this, and that by a word, (else it is a deceit,) which all angels could not do before, so as to see it, and that none can reveal it as he sees it, especially to bring this light out of darkness, this must be miraculous power, and no dream. But what do I speak of seeing? They feel the beginnings of it in the first fruits of it.

For two great things shall be at that day.

First. Then all the elect shall have their fill of love.

Secondly. Triumph in Christ when in the clouds with him. Have they not the first here? Rom. v. 5. The feeling of which love can not be a fancy, for it can not conceive of it nor hold it. This is an infinite love, and that in the midst of the fence of sin and death. That many times they are even fain to say, Lord, hold. 2. Triumph. Rom. v. 3. And that in afflictions, which make them by experience so to feel God in part, that they triumph for time to come. It is true, at times, they look down the tower, and so tremble; but while they look up here, then they triumph, having access to the grace wherein they stand; so, then, look for it, there shall be such a day and such a coming of Christ. Rev. i. 7. The Father has exalted the Son to ineffable glory. But, Lord, who sees him as these, in his glory, or to come forth out of his glory? It is but table-talk. But, "Behold, he comes, and every eye shall see him." The Lord pities you, and holds out bowels of love and faith; O, receive me! O, cast away those bloody knives that have pierced me; and sends his Spirit, like his hand, to draw you. But, O, do you not kick his bowels, do you not pierce his hands and feet daily? And when you have done, no tears. But he comes, and you that pierce him shall see him, etc. Consider of it, therefore, you that doubt of this, you that think not of this, and hence live and lie in your lusts, and despise him. Behold, he comes!

Section IV.

Use 2. Hence behold the happiness of all them that be espoused to the Lord Jesus, in that their hopes are laid up in

another world, at the day of the coming of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. xv. 19, "If we had hope only in this life, we were of all men most miserable." Because none so foolish or so sensible of misery as they; but our hopes stretch to another life, to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose a man had all the crowns of the world cast at his feet, but at last to be dragged before the judgment seat of Christ, and there to stand quaking, what should he be the better? What though saints have all the miseries in this world; but, at last, "with these eyes they shall see the Lord," and stand triumphing before him, and have a real sight and certain expectation of this. What people in the world so great as these!

Quest. What do they wait and expect for?

Ans. Great things, which may astonish the whole creation.

1. They look for him "to change their vile bodies," that this their husband, at the marriage day, should take away these rags, "and make them like unto his glorious body," brighter than the sun; so that burn them, cut them to pieces, they see Christ loves both, and hence holds sword and soul in one hand, and scabbard in another, etc.

2. They expect he should take away all their sins, and make them like unto himself; engrave on their souls perfectly his own image, that their enemies they feel now, they look they "shall never see them more." 1 John iii. 2. And as no evil like it, no mercy like this; and no evil to saints like this, that yet they should grieve the heart of such a husband.

3. They look that he should take away all sorrows and tears from them; for this the Lord promiseth, and begins to execute now, but it shall be perfected then. Is. xxv. 8, 9. And hence called "the times of refreshing." Acts iii. 19, 20. It is true, the spouse and church is now sorrowful to the very heart many times, but there is a time coming that they shall never sorrow more.

4. They look that he should take away all shame from them. For no people in the world is laden with more calumnies and reproaches by the wicked and by hypocrites, and hard speeches from the godly, and they doubt whether they be sons or no. Now, then the whole world shall see they are sons, and shall stand amazed at them, and shall not doubt of it, nor themselves; for the Lord shall proclaim it, and they shall hear, These are my jewels. And this they look for. 1 John iii. 1, 2.

5. They look for recompense to all their "labor of love" to him and his. Hence, (1 Cor. xv. 58,) "Knowing your labor is

not in vain in the Lord." Hence the apostle oft defers men for that recompense till now. "The Lord show mercy to the house Onesiphorus in that day." 2 Tim. i. 18. So that some heretics have thought souls sleep till then. They may pray, and no answer; seek to do good, and do none. O, but the Lord will recompense them abundantly.

6. They look then to "be ever with the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 17. Never to be parted from him, never to live without him; nay, never to go away from under his wing, out of his bleeding bosom of love and endless and unspeakable compassions any more. And being with him to see his glory, and never see the depth of it, and to have the Lord to serve them, (Luke xii. 37, 38,) and giving whatever they call for, and all this when thousand thousands shall at this time be crying for a drop of water, and can not get it. Now, all this they look for, and more too. Which is, 1. Certain. For "hope maketh not ashamed." 2. Which fills their hearts with glory, and unspeakable glory, too; for it makes it so clear and certain that they have it all already; for though absent, hope makes it as present. Rom. viii. 24. He doth not say we shall be, but "we are saved by hope." Faith takes hold on the beginning, hope on the end. O, the heavy wrath of God upon a world of poor, blind, ignorant men, that have no hope, no hope of Christ, no hope of glory, unless a flattering dead hope. What a sad thing is it to think of a number of men that are buried in the world, and never to awaken until they see Christ in the clouds of heaven, coming to be revenged on them! O, methinks I see them falling down before the judgment seat, and crying out, O that we had known of this day! O, alas! that I had hope! but not such a hope, but am now deceived. O, it is otherwise with saints; they shall find what they hoped for, and infinitely more. What hurt can any do them? Let all the world come against them, their husband will come, and will kick them under his feet. Let them load them with reproaches, fill their hearts with sorrows and their eyes with tears, their Lord's coming will comfort them. Let Satan tempt, and a Father hide his face, behold, the Lord cometh, that shall deliver and redeem them. O, see their blessedness, and let it draw you to make up the match with Christ, that never did it yet. He has been wooing of you, longing for you, and you wooing of him again. Lord, take me. What hinders you, then, from striking the match and concluding it? To give thyself this day to him, and take him only, rejoice in him only, when nothing thou dost can be so pleasing to him. And now

you may look and believe what one day you shall to your comfort feel. And account yourselves most wretched creatures until the Lord be pleased to espouse you to himself.

Section V.

Use 3. *Of Examp.* Or hence learn what to judge of those that never look for the coming and company of the Lord Jesus. It is with them as it was with the Israelites; when Moses was gone into the mount, and staid there long, the people made their calf, and went to their feasting and rejoicing. So the Lord Jesus being gone for the Spirit of life, and to prepare a place of glory, it being now long since, they make idols of their jewels, and of their own excellencies, and of whatsoever is glorious in their eyes in this world. Or, as Christ compares the secure world, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be;" or as in the days of Lot, when they never knew nor looked for it, though told of it, so it is with them. Do you think these are espoused to Christ, or made ready for Christ, whose glorious appearing is never, or seldom, or the least thing in their thoughts, and are far from seeing and setting it before their eyes?

Now, because if you ask men, Do you look for such a time to see the world consumed, and the Lord revealed, and your glory with him? every one will say, Yes, because indeed they have a dead hope. I shall, therefore, give discoveries of it.

Sign 1. Those whose hearts prize (though their heads do not) and whose eyes are dazzled with the withering glory of this world. When men lie under (not for a fit, for Christ's disciples wondered at the beauty of the temple) a great mistake of all things here, and put that good in them which is not, and that worth upon them which they ought not. For he on whose eyes the Son of glory has risen, and looks for the glory which shall be revealed, looks upon a dunghill world as strangers do upon their inn, and as travelers do on their tents, make a shift to rub it out for a time; but, O, home! O, "that glory that shall be revealed." Heb. xi. 13. They were strangers, because "they looked for a city." Nay, they look upon these things as God and Christ judge of them, (for they have Christ's mind, 1 Cor. ii. 15.) which stand for ciphers in the Lord's book. Nay, they look upon the very miseries of this world, for Christ, greater treasures than the happiness of it, and hence choose it, and account their scars their crown, their shame their glory, their losses their gain, their sorrows their joys; as Heb. xi. 25, 26. Moses chose to suffer, and esteemed Christ's reproach his glory.

And why? "He had an eye to the recompense of reward," and saw the God invisible. And, (2 Cor. iv. 17,) "It works an exceeding weight of glory." Look as it is with a man that is born to great hopes of a crown and kingdom, and therefore brought up not in the country, but in the court; let a poor man offer him his thatched house, and promise him, if he will come and live with him, and serve him in his patched clothes, what will he say? No; begone to your friends; I am a greater man than you can make me. So here; a man that is born and begotten to a lively hope of a crown now, by the resurrection of Christ, and brought up under the wings and care of Christ, to the hopes of a better world. Offer never so much, promise never so fair, I am greater than all the world can make me. I must not have if I love Christ, and I can not have if he loves me, both; and hence looks to honor then, and peace and glory then. Col. iii. 1–3. It is clear, then, thou lookest upon the things of the world as great things. O, to have such honor; such an estate; so many cows and goats; so much ground paled in; so many plows; lands, and oxen fit to labor; so much gain to come in every year; and such parts and gifts and duties to get me a name, to live before the best men, and to be good signs (to comfort me) of the favor of God. This is a goodly thing; the very hopes heat and warm the heart.

1. If you do not feel pangs in parting with a friend, — a bosom blessing so dear, — you are not dead yet to it, nor risen to a lively hope of better things.

2. He that does not prize the evils of the world more than the good in it, his eyes are dazzled with it. If the life of the world be not death to thee, the comfort of the world sorrow to thee, O, they draw thy heart from God; hence called "lying vanities." Look as it is with a king or master that gives talents to use, they cast them by, and fish for themselves; they look not for the coming of their masters. So the Lord gives you his ordinances, and word to use for him, and you scramble for yourselves, to enrich, and honor, and comfort yourselves; you look not for the Lord. Factors that go far for wealth, they will not bring home stone and rubbish, which they know will not go in their own country; hence other things that are of more price he spends his time for; so here. What do you do, you that eat the bread of carefulness, sell your commodities dear, and set your buyers on tenter hooks? I look to be rich. You that can speak well, and have parts, and profess fairly; but go into your closets, God is neglected in your hearts, your constant union to Christ, dependence on Christ, approving yourselves to Christ, is not

maintained. I would fain be honored. You are come far from your own country. Why did you depart thence? To be free from trouble. And now here, what stay you for? O, for ease. Will these coins go, and be taken at the last day? No, you look not for that.

Sign 2. They that say they look for Christ, but do not rejoice abundantly in hope of this time. Sometimes the hopes of God's people begin to die, and then comfortless; but, when their hopes are up and stirring, and not wounded by some sin, or sleeping, there is a double joy that now they have.

1. This alone comforts them and fills them. John xiv. 1–3. So that they wonder at God, though they have never so little here, to have these blessings now, and everlasting glory, endless compassions and mercy at that day. John xvi. 22.

2. This joy is glorious joy, highest comfort. Rom. v. 3, "We glory in hope of the glory of God." Disgraced, but then honored; hated of men, but then loved of Christ; poor, but then enriched; miserable, but then blessed; empty, but then filled; fatherless, friendless, but then glorified. O, I tell you, miseries thus considered are sweet! Can it be otherwise? Now you say you hope and look for this day. Where is your comfort of it? Where is your glory in it? Acts i. 11, 12, compared with Luke xxiv. 52. So thou wilt be in the temple, nay, in the fields, rejoicing and blessing the Lord, that ever he should intend to set thee at his right hand at that great day of his coming. No man but has something to joy his heart. It is "corn and wine and oil," and not "the light of God's countenance," at this day. It is a sign they never look for. Do the world rejoice in their hopes, and not saints?

Sign 3. They that content themselves with any measure of holiness and grace, they look not for Christ's coming and company. For saints that do look for him, though they have not that holiness and grace they would have, yet they rest not satisfied with any measure. 1 John iii. 3, "He that hath this hope purifieth himself, as he is pure." Christ finds us not lovely, but makes us lovely, by putting on his own garments, imprinting his own image. Hence saints content not themselves with any dressings, till made glorious, and so fit for fellowship with that spouse. And when the soul sees this love to be a son, and then to be proclaimed heir, O, this makes them set Christ himself as the pattern to walk by. Now, therefore, —

1. When men shall think this way is bad, and another way of some saints is good, and take a copy of his course from them, and now is well, this only is to be pure as man is pure.

2. When a man leaves not till he gets such a measure of faith

and grace, and now when he has got this, contents himself with this as a good sign he shall be saved, he looks not for Christ. Or, —

3. When men are heavily laden with sin, then close with Christ, and then are comforted, sealed, and have joy that fills them, and now the work is done, and they are past grace, and past repentance and daily cleansing, now they study not what to do for Christ, that neither family nor church where they live are the better for them.

4. When men shall not content themselves with any measure, but wish they had more, if grace would grow while they tell clocks and sit idle, and so God must do all; but do not purge themselves, and make work of it, (indeed saints purge not themselves of themselves, for dirty hands will never wash a foul face,) but by a daily dependence on, and importunity of faith, sigh after the Lord to do it; verily, if not thus, you look not for Christ. 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12, 14. For if you did, you would say and think, If to be like him be my glory, O, then, that I might have it now. Sons that are born to their hopes in the court will go in the court fashion; beggars that are born and brought up under hedges content themselves with their rags; so here. Lord, where is this Spirit? especially even among us. There is scarce any but either would be honest, and then hopes God accepts of his will, or will be so, and then it is so much as will credit or comfort him. Lord, where is the man that mourns for this? How far short he falls of Christ, of Christ's prayers, Christ's speeches, Christ's meekness, but only patches up his comforts with some ends of gold and silver, and shreds of honesty! He hath heard others teach and preach, and gets some shreds of knowledge; thence he sees what others are, and do, and gets somewhat to be like them: have we not cried out, Men are too good to be better in our own land? And unless a few under affliction or temptation, who is? I pray God such a race come not over hither, where God looks you should get a higher pitch; put off your wilderness shoes, get those sins removed that provoked God there; or else, besides the misery of a heart brand upon thee, thou dost not look for Christ, and therefore art either not espoused, or asleep; and shalt, if not by the word, by the terror of God be dreadfully awakened. O, *New England! New England!* that art now making a conquest of the world, and seekest for the spoil of it to enrich thyself, to recover thy losses, and therefore makest a truce with thy distempers for a time, and dost not purge thyself as Christ is pure, I dare not yet tell thee what Christ Jesus has to say unto thee! Therefore

think of this that do not, he shall come in a time when thou lookest not for him, and hast not so much grace as the five foolish virgins had. This is the frame of men and professors; what are they? They were troubled, humiliation is past; they have looked for salvation by Christ, that is past; they have been comforted, that is past. What holiness? They will pray in families, keep company with saints, get into Christ, receive sacraments, that is past. What lack they yet? Many wants; but God accepts their desires for what they want, and that is their circle of honesty now, and there rest. Is it not thus? Is this to purge like Christ? If any have more, O, wonder at the Lord for it. But if not, O, thy doom.

Section VI.

Use 4. O, you espoused and beloved of the Lord, look for his coming, look for his company: the world looks not for him, because they care not; "Will you also depart?" Has he called thee as a virgin forsaken, and not comforted, as a wife of youth, and given himself to thee, and given thee a heart to give content to him, and thyself to him in lieu of his love, life and all, if it might do him any good? O, are you born to so great hopes, and are they not worth the looking after? God forbid. Do this, therefore, especially in these five cases.

1. In case of strangeness felt between thy soul and Christ. It may be thou thinkest, O, he that has saved, preserved me, called me when I never looked after him, redeemed me when a captive, every moment pardons me, a daily friend unto me, that has given me ordinances, given me the comfort of them. But, O, yet to be a stranger to him, this cuts. O, look now for this time. 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. When thou shalt see that bleeding heart, that has loved thee above all princes and angels, that body in the glory of the Father, and be as familiar with him as thou art known. O, look for this, for it shall be so.

2. In case God's promises are not made good to thee. For at that instant a man believes, he gives Christ and all things, all grace, all consolation, all glory; but it is in the promise, because he would have them live by faith a while here, as by sense in heaven; and being wrapped up in the promise, they feel it not, only plead with God. Hast not said, Lord, thou wilt subdue iniquities, purge me as gold is tried? Why then do I go childless, graceless? No more grace, no more Spirit, no better heart for thee? O, now the heart calls in question God's promise or sinks. O, now, remember this day, for the perfect restitution

of all things, perfect accomplishment of all promises, is reserved for this time. Is. xxv. 9. Thou prayest for many things, but they come not; Christ reserves the payment till this day. What a comfort is this! What a sweet speech was it of Joshua, (Josh. xxiii. 14,) "One thing hath not failed," when he had conquered the land. So then, when the conquest is made, to see all the promises made good to thee.

3. In case of God's absence or withdrawing, or when thou feelest but little of his presence here in his providences or in his ordinances, private, public, and that in New England, too. Thou hast found one half hour's time with the Lord, alone, sweeter and better than a thousand worlds. O, but this holds not. Thou mayst, it may be, wait on the Lord in his ordinances, and go away with a sad heart; O, I can not see him, and canst not find out the cause why so heavy and vile, and so loathest thyself. O, now think of this day. 1 Cor. xv. 28. Then God shall be "all in all;" then thou shalt have thy fill of love, and fill of God.

4. In case of sorrow for the uproar of the world against God and Christ, and the wrongs done to Christ and his people; to see Christ crucified, and crying, Spare my life; and saying, "If you seek me, let these little ones depart;" yet they are abused, and every one against Christ, as this day the world is coming to the last fit of madness against the Lord of glory. O, now, remember and look for this day. 1 Cor. xv. 25, "He must reign." Lord, what a comfort will it be to see Christ king then! Men come to see him king here; but, O, what will it be when he shall come himself, to see all secrets open, and the Lord glorified, in himself and people, of all creatures! Look for this, to see the great and last plot of God brought to perfection. O, think, that is our day, that is our victory!

5. When you come to die, and think of leaving thy carcass to rot in the dust a long time, O, think and look upon this day. "They that hear shall live." Why do I die? John v. 28, 29, "They shall then come out of their graves," etc. Thus look for this.

Motive 1. All creatures look for this in a manner. Rom. viii. 22, 23. Nay, Christ and saints in heaven look for this day. Heb. x. 13, "From thence expecting till his enemies," etc. Nay, devils look for it, but tremble. Only a secure world, locked asleep to their eternal woe, look not for it.

2. This will help you to ride all storms, bear all knocks cheerfully. Our hope is our helmet, our hope is our anchor. Heb. vi. 19; Eph. vi. 17. You will meet with them here, it may be, before you die.

3. The Lord has called you out of this world; he might have left you in it, and given you your hope, your portion here, and then woe to thee; but he has called thee to this hope, that if princes of the world knew, they would lay down, nay, cast their crowns at thy feet for it, and say, O that I were in that man's case! Eph. i. 18, "Hope of his calling."

4. Hope and expectation of all other things shall fail; if God loves thee, he will make you know what it is to forsake your portion. If not, they shall fail you when you die; this shall not; it "makes not ashamed."

5. Methinks this is the glory of a Christian, that he turns his back upon the world, and lives and waits for the coming of the Lord.

6. O, this will give Christ's heart full content, when he shall come. Luke xii. 37, "He will make thee sit down to eat, and serve thee." The Lord Jesus himself shall only then pour out to thee, and give thee whatever thou callest for; honor thee, as it were, above himself. When thou art at rest in heaven, he will be at work for thee.

7. If not, he may "come in an hour thou lookest not for him." Christ may say to thee, From henceforth sleep on.

Quest. What means are there to make me look for him?

Ans. 1. Get some promise that thou mayst believe the Lord is thine, else thou wilt never look for him; or if you do, you will be deceived, for "hope is of things not seen." Nay, commonly, when the Lord brings any man to his hopes, having given him a promise and faith to believe it, the Lord, in the midway, seems to cross his promise. When the Lord promises life, glory, peace, honor, joy, fullness, heaven, they shall then, and never so much before, feel darkness, shame, trouble, sorrow, hell. For the Lord tries them by this, and "tribulation breeds experience, and experience hope." Hence you must first get a promise of Christ and glory before you can hope for it, or expect glory, and then you may. Heb. vi. 18. For the promise will support hope when heart, and strength, and all shall fail. Nay, it will expect contraries out of contraries; (Gen. xxii. 5,) "I will come again to you;" compare with Heb. xi. 18, 19. So that soul that has a promise may say, when he considers God's power, and what glory he gives to God by believing it, God has said he will comfort me; he will cleanse me; he will give me glory. I will have all these out of my sorrow, my sin, my hell.

Take heed, therefore, of two extremes.

First. Of hoping without a promise; for that is but faith scared out of its wits, when it comes to be examined; I hope so, and I have had joy and persuasion of it.

Secondly. Of not expecting when God gives a promise. Can you live one day without it? It may be you have no feeling yet. But Is. xxv. 8–10. Dost thou wait for the Lord, (i. e., from a sense of emptiness, for all fullness thou shalt find in part here, and fully then,) and say, "Lo, this our God, we have waited for him"? When a man's anchor is strong, and in good ground, he will look for safety when in the harbor. O, thou afflicted and tossed with tempests, the Lord has brought thee at last to Christ, after many drivings to and fro, and it clasps about him according to a promise; if God changeth, then thy comfort may not be. If revelations come, I know they may deceive; but a promise can not.

2. Fear the terror of the Lord at this day, fear parting from him. I speak not of doubting, but the holy fear of saints; for that is the nature of fear, it makes a man eye the thing feared, as Jacob, when Esau was meeting of him. Noah fears, and looks to safety in and by an ark. Heb. xi. 7. Lot's children took not his counsel; they feared not, but "he seemed as one that mocked to them." Paul (2 Cor. v. 10, 11) "knew the terror of the Lord," hence looked for him, sought to approve himself unto him. Men that fear not parting with Christ will never look nor care for him. And let it be a strong fear, else it will never carry you above your cares and surfeitings of the world.

Quest. How shall I fear thus?

Ans. Unless the Lord put it into your heart, none can; for the security of the world is not sleepy, but deadly. Men are bound up as strong as with chains of death; that, till they feel the misery, they can not fear it strongly. O, look up to the Lord to unchain those chains of death.

2. Know the happiness of them that shall ever be with Christ, what is the sweetness of Christ's love, and worth of it. Imagine the last day come, and all the dead raised, Christ with flaming fire, all the wicked on the left hand, and then sent away with, "Depart, ye cursed;" all the saints on the right hand, and then, O come! and when all is despatched, then to go up to heaven; and when gone, there to be forever rejoicing, triumphing in the presence of God Almighty; and now what it will be to be far off from Christ, weeping, never to be pitied more! O, he that was so full of pity, no heart then to pity, no hand to help! I can but only paint this fire. O that the Lord would help you here, that so you might look out for him! Sailors sleep in calms, and so, it may be, have many here in this place of rest. Others of you take heed, I will tell you your bar. It may be most estates are brought low and sunk; when you see that, now you

either look back, or look for Lot's accommodations, and such an estate as is lost, it may be you will spy some hope of it, and then follow the game, and never look out till you die. The Lord keep you from it! You, then, will not look up for Christ's coming at the last day, or in his ordinances here. If thou dost so, had it not been better thou hadst been buried in the sea, or left in sorrow on the shore? O, take heed, therefore; look for the coming and company of Christ, and let this be enough; and because you can not look for him in the clouds now, O, look and wait for him in his ordinances; and consider if espoused ones look for his coming then, and for perfect knowledge of him and communion with him, then think, Lord, what a heart have I, that look not for him here! But, Lord, "who will believe our report?"

Thus they went out by hope and expectation of his coming. Now, the second thing follows — they went forth with longing desires after his coming.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT BELIEVERS DO LONG AND DESIRE FOR THE APPEARANCE AND SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

SECTION I.

Doctrine 3. That all those that are espoused to Christ, and beloved of Christ, they ought not only to look but to long for the coming of, and their everlasting communion with, the Lord Jesus Christ; for the consummation of their marriage with him, that, though he be gone, our hearts may be with him before our souls be, or before our souls and bodies be; that though we may die and lie down in the dust, our desires may live and lie in heaven, and cry, "Come, Lord." Now, do not think this point true, and so far good, if we could reach it, but this is a high pitch; for you must long for it. God forbid a Christian espoused to Christ should plead that work too much which hypocrites, "the five foolish virgins," in their kind, attained to. See precedents for this in all ages: Abraham, and those of his time, who was "father of the faithful;" (Heb. xi. 15, 16,) "A better country," where they might have fellowship with the Lord, and "hence God is not ashamed," etc. As if the Lord were ashamed of all them to be his people that profess themselves so, but desire not this. In Christ's time, Simeon, (Luke ii. 29, with xxv.,)

where "he waited for the consolation of Israel," etc., to enjoy more of him. In the apostles' time, it is also that which they all felt, (2 Cor. v. 2,) "In this we groan earnestly," etc. But you will say, It may be this was because of miseries, and want of ordinances, etc. Therefore see, in the last age of the church, when the new Jerusalem was built, and when peace, and when Christ's face was seen in his house, yet then the "Spirit and the bride say, Come." Rev. xxii. 17. They are the last breathings of John and the Spirit in him: "Lord Jesus, come quickly." But (Cant. viii. 14) the church there entreats her beloved to "fly away to the mountains of spices," that she might enjoy him out of this world.

Section II.

Reason 1. Because they are bound to love Christ and his appearing; to love his looks when he shall appear to the world. 2 Tim. iv. 8. The crown of glory comes as it were by succession, not only to me, but to "all them that love his appearing." Now, can there be any love of him and his appearing, and not so much as any desire after him and after it? Certainly there is no love; or, if there be any, it lies languishing. For answerable to our love to any thing is our desire; what we love only, we desire only; what we love not at all, or but little, we desire not at all, or but little; so here. Now, therefore, to question — may a Christian desire it? is to question whether a Christian ought to love the Lord Jesus or no. We are bound not to love earth, hence bound to love Christ and his fellowship in heaven. "Let him be anathema" that doth not so.

Reason 2. Because the Lord Jesus longs for them, (John xvii. 24,) throughout which chapter he prays as if in heaven already. "Hence I am no more in this world, and where I am, let them be also." He was on earth, but looks on himself as in heaven. That as it was with the high priest, he carries the names of the twelve tribes on his heart, "beset with precious stones," very dear to him, "into the holy of holies;" so Christ. Not that he sees any beauty in them of their own why he should desire them, but because he freely loves them, and dearly loves them, as being given him of the Father, and as having cost him dear; and hence, if he loves them, he longs for them. Now, if he longs not for them, ought they not much more to long for him? Ps. xxvii. 8, "Thou saidst, Seek my face; thy face, Lord, will I seek."

1. He longs for thee now in glory, when one would think his

thoughts and heart should be swallowed up with it; and shall not we long for him here in the valley of myrtle trees, in misery, on the dunghill?

2. He longs for thee when thou hast nothing to make him desire thee; he has all that thy heart can desire, being the very bosom delight of God himself. Rev. xxii. *penult.* He did but say he would come, and John desires, O, come! But doth he long for thee? Now, not to long for him! If this love be not worth longing for, truly it is worth nothing.

Reason 3. Because this is our last and ultimate end, that we are made for, chosen for, bought for, called for, sealed for, that at last we might be with the Lord, and be made perfect in one. 2 Cor. v. 5, "He that has made us for this is God," etc. For the whole Trinity, enjoying infinite sweet fellowship with himself, hence desire it might be communicated; in Christ it is so, and now the last end is attained. Now, if this be our last end, ought we not to desire it? Then, we ought not to desire to be blessed, nor to desire the Lord may be glorified. Nay, you know that whatever we make our last end, it will swallow up all our desires after any other thing. This is the center, and rest, and journey's end of our tired, weary spirits. And the truth is, when we make it our last end, we can not but desire it.

Section III.

Object. But ought not a man to desire to live here in this world as David and Hezekiah did? May not one sin in this desire?

Ans. It is true, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," not only in regard that they are as precious to him when they come to die, as while they live, as gold when it is melting is as precious to the goldsmith as when whole, and it may be more too, because it is then made better; but also because he will not lightly cast away their lives. He that bottles their tears, and will not let them be lost, will not easily let go their lives; and if God will not, they ought not upon every slight occasion to desire their death, and loss of their lives, to be with the Lord.

Now, there are two cases God's own people may desire to remove hence, where, though there be some fire I confess, yet there is more smoke than fire, more sin than grace.

1. In case they meet with much unkindness from, and many sorrows in, the world, and behold the sins of it. Thus it was with Elias, (1 Kings xix. 4,) who, when Jezebel threatened his

life, fled, and would needs set sail presently, and be gone; so it is with God's people, when they see enemies without, the universal rot of profession, that they think they are almost left alone; when God hath begun to do good by them, as by Elijah, but they think their best days are past, there is all they shall do, and God himself, it may be, meeting them with some crosses in this world. Now, presently they grow weary of their lives, and desire to die, which is nothing else but a pang of discontent; truly, God will not suffer it, nor you ought not to desire it, to die away in such a snuff. No; the Lord has work for them to do, and a journey to go. This desire is nought, and it is but a weed, and to be pulled up, that grows out of such a root as a discontented heart for crosses. I confess, God uses sorrows as means to smoke us out of our hive, and we may use them for that end, but not only or chiefly them, nor from a pang or moody fit of discontent.

2. In case they desire death and not life, before they be ripe for death. Husbandmen desire their corn in, but it is folly to desire it in before it be ripe, and then they may. I confess it is the commendation of some trees, if not only good, but if ripe betimes; and it is the honor of a Christian to be ripe for death betimes, yet still before he is ripe he is not to desire it.

Quest. Now, when is this?

Ans. 1. While the Lord hides his face, and denies full assurance of his love, in this case, as a Christian can not, so he ought not, (if it were the Lord's will,) desire to be gone as yet; and this is one reason why David and Hezekiah desired life, not death as yet. God had broken their bones, and his arrows were yet in their hearts. Now, a man is to desire he may stay a little while longer, that he may "sing the song of the Lamb," and tell the world "what the Lord hath done for him," and that he may not set in a cloud and die in horror. Mariners long to be on shore; but before they come there, they would not venture in a mist, but see land first; so should we desire to see the Lord in the land of the living. Nay, though the Lord gives his people a promise, which stays their hearts, and is a twig to keep them from sinking; nay, when he gives them some joy, yet still God has promised to reveal more of himself and his Christ in the promise, seeing him but darkly now. Now, they ought not to desire, but wait, as in Simeon's case — "Now, let thy servant depart in peace," having long "waited for the consolation of Israel." Children that will be up before it is day must be whipped; a rod is most fit for them; stay till it is day.

2. While their work remains unfinished, and the Lord has got

little or no glory from them, though they may have clear evidence of the Lord's love. Christ himself desired it not till now. John xvii. 5. If thou couldst scale heaven before thy work was done, the Lord would send thee down from thence again, as he did the soul of Lazarus; and, truly, to do the work of Christ one moment here is better than to have a thousand years' felicity in heaven, nakedly considered in itself, inasmuch as the honor of Christ is a thousand times better than our own good. It may be there is much work within doors, many odd distempers to be cashiered, spiritual decays, etc. It may be there is work without; Christ has many enemies in the world, many prayers are yet to be spent against them, much good to do for his church, many tears to be shed for them; for praying trade is past in heaven. It may be some friends yet to be converted, thou hast been a scandal to them; it may be as yet few have been, or can say they be, the warmer or better for thee; that work is yet to be done. It may be God has some secrets to reveal by thee before thou diest; stay, therefore, a while, while your work is done. It is true, thou hast but one talent, but little thou hast or canst do; yet God looks you should improve it whilst he is gone. A man that will needs to bed at noonday, before night comes, what deserves he but a cudgel? So he that will die before his night comes, and while it is light to see and work by. When, therefore, you apprehend your work even done; then as not only Christ, but Paul; not only Paul, but God's watchful servants, have secret warnings of death. And as mariners, when they see no land, yet, by their soundings, can tell they are near land or sands, then you may desire it; for then you are ripe, but it is sin to do it otherwise. And, verily, happy is that man that accounts not his life dear, but only the finishing of his course with joy. To conclude all, we are to desire our fellowship with Christ, as a man desires his last end, which desire doth not exclude, but include, desire after all the means first, before the end. Now, many things are to be done by God upon us, and by us for the Lord again, before we appear before Christ, which we may desire, firstly, for this our last end.

Section IV.

1. Hence we see the vileness of the great, yet hidden secret sin of the whole world, which may be in part also in God's dearest saints, viz., in their hungry lustings and dropsy desires after the sweet of the things of this world. You shall have a man that amends his life, reforms his course, forsakes his

own righteousness, no man's tongue can tell him, his own conscience can not bear witness against him, that he lives in any unlawful course; and I believe it is so, and may be and will be so. Shall I tell you, therefore, what hurts them? They are inordinate lustings after lawful things in themselves, and these they serve. Tit. iii. 3. Partly they grieve him, if they do not satisfy and serve them; partly, because they pay them with pleasures and delights, if they do. Hence, "serving lusts and pleasures," too, these, like tops of mountains, are seen; now when floods of wickedness begin to abate, these will continue while the life lasts.

I intend not to show you at large, but according to my text, the vileness of them.

1. They eat out all desire after the Lord Jesus and his fellowship, that he can not long for the Lord Jesus. For a man can lay out no more than he has; now, when his desires are lavished and let out to other things, how can he lay out any on Christ? And thus the Lord of glory comes to bear most horrible contempt, that he is not worth desiring in such a man's books. Thus it was with them, (Luke xiv. 18,) "Every one refused." Why? Because of their oxen, and wives, and farms —lawful things; but they lusted too much after these. When a harlot seeks to satisfy her lusts, she cares not how far her husband be off, never desires his coming home; so here. Many a one complains he can not desire the Lord Jesus, which, I confess, is in mercy to some. But where is the cause of it? O, they are running in another channel, and spent on other things. What a heavy curse is this! Some never think of death once in a moon, much less long for Christ; desire not his fellowship here, much less there. And why? Because of their lusts that eat out all.

2. Suppose they do not thus, but your heart is divided, so that you long for these things now, and preserve your longing for him against you come to die; yet these will make you lose his sweet fellowship. For a man's affections are precious things, and it is a pity any else should have them; they are all little enough for Christ, and Christ is worth desiring and longing for, and he stands upon it, and will make them know that have him that all is too little for him, and they shall give him all before he give himself to their comfort. Hence deny him these, and never think to have himself and his fellowship. Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26, "It is good for me to draw nigh." How? By desiring, not earth nor heaven, but him. Hence he saith, "Thou destroyest all them that go a whoring from thee." Verse 27.

3. Suppose thou shouldst have him at last; yet he will never desire thee, never take any delight in thee, until that you come to get your affections unloosed here. Ps. xlv. 10, 11. Dost thou not find a strangeness between Christ and thy soul? Doth he not hide his face? Doth he not soon depart from thee, though he appears sometimes to thee? Doth he not let thee lie like a broom behind the door, and doth little by thee either within or without? And is not this a sad and heavy thing? Why, sayest thou, doth the Lord deal thus with me? O, thy heart is yet after thy father's house; if thou didst forget it, then he would "take pleasure in thy beauty." What pleasure can earth give thee, when then the Lord takes no pleasure in thee?

Object. But may not a man desire these things? If we may, how far?

Ans. 1. A man may lawfully desire them, provided his desires are not swallowed up in them, but run through them to Christ himself. For it is not lust, properly to desire a creature, or any pleasure in it; but to desire it for itself, and for pleasure's sake; for now a man makes a god of it. Thus it was with the Israelites; (Exodus xvii.,) "Give us water that we may drink;" so, give me sleep that I may rest; give me clothes that I may be warm; give me an estate that I may be rich, etc. Now, when a heart desires them, but his desires end not there, but run through them to Christ, that he flings down all comforts, and sayeth, What is this to fellowship with Christ! Thus far a man may desire and rejoice in them, and it is a sin to do otherwise. Nehem. ix. 35. A man may be content to have a spring run through his ground to the sea, to be swallowed up there; but to swell and rise, and overflow his ground and house, that is not safe; he may be drowned so. So men come to be drowned in their lusts that let them swell within doors.

II. A man may desire them if he doth not spend more desire upon them than they be worth. A man may desire them for a good end, as he thinks, but then he lays out too much upon them. A man may spend too much in his inn, when he takes it up only as a way to his home.

1. They are perishing things; therefore let them have perishing desires. "The world passeth away." They are passengers by us, that stay to rest with us for a time; let them have passengers' welcome.

2. They are not necessary things; let them have, therefore, indifferent desires. I must have Christ, and his Spirit, etc., not these things; they are to be sought not in the first, but in the second place. Therefore say, first Christ; now let me have

Christ. Men say now these things, then Christ. I say, now the Lord Jesus, whether ever you have them or no.

III. Now, all superfluity of evil desires is to be crucified. Gal. v. 24, "They that are in Christ have crucified," etc. Christ was not a dead, but first a crucified Christ before; so no saint living but he hath some superfluous desires; but though they live, they do crucify them; so ought you. There are two things in crucifying.

1. There is extreme pain upon the cross.

2. A looking for death. So, then, lusts are crucified, —

1. When you taste the bitterness of your lusts by putting them on Christ's cross. O the wrongs they have done to the Son of God! And do this with violence; say, you shall to the cross. He that looks to Christ with a frolic heart to kill his lusts, shall never find him.

2. Now, looking and longing for their death, by holding them there. Unless the blood of Christ slay these, I will never have any death for them; for all the reason in the world will never kill a lust, no more than all the reason will persuade the stomach not to hunger. The belly hath no ears.

Thus you are to moderate your desires after these things; which I speak of, —

First. Because it is a wilderness sin, (Ps. cxvi. 14, 15,) which, it may be, you feel, brings leanness on your soul. And, —

Secondly. Because it is the sin of prosperity and peace which God hath given us, which will grow up and choke the word, that all ordinances and truths will in time be sapless, favorless things unto us.

Thirdly. Because I have had strong fears lately of some unexpected trials among us, and I should be glad if it might not be, if the freedom from them might make us better; else, I say, let them come. But, —

Fourthly. Because it is a rare thing among us to see such burning lamps as look and long for Christ's coming, which when I consider, though there be other causes, yet one great one is this: O, the heart is gone away by violent lusts after these things here. O, therefore, take heed of them; and therefore consider, —

1. You shall have Christ and his fellowship, if, indeed, you long for him; (John iv. 10,) that is his love. You are not so desirous but he is a thousand times more. Thou mayst desire these things, and, if God loves thee, miss of them. God will make thee poor when thou wouldst be rich, base when thou wilt be honored, and when you would have honey, he will give you

stings; and cause you have to thank the Lord, too, that he will not give you your portion here.

2. If thou hast them, and dost desire them, and God gives them, and thou lettest Christ go, thou hadst better a thousand times be without them. Ps. lxxviii. 31, "The meat was in their mouths, and the wrath of God came upon them." If the Lord gives thee Christ, happy forever; if these things, when thou dost so desire them, O, woe forever.

3. The fellowship of the Lord Jesus thou shalt never lose. Death shall not part thee from that; nothing shall rob thee of that; but look after and long for these things, they will perish and die away. "All flesh is grass; the word of the Lord," and the Lord himself much more, "endureth forever."

4. Why dost thou desire these things? For some sweet in them. Why is not all that in the presence of the Lord Jesus, and enjoying him? "It pleaseth the Father that in him should all fullness dwell," so that thou shalt drink as out of a pure fountain all that is there. If there be any sweetness here, he gave it; it is much more eminently in himself; (Exodus xxiv. 11,) "They saw the God of Israel, and eat and drank." Had they meat up with them? O, no; but the sight of him was meat and drink, and all unto them. As, therefore, you desire Christ's fellowship, O, long no more after these things here!

Use 2. Hence, see death is not to be feared, but desired of all saints. It was an odd speech of a heathen, "It is ill to desire death, and worse to fear it;" he meant, not because of any good in it, but because we must die. But death brings us into eternal fellowship with the Lord Jesus. It does saints more good than all ordinances, all afflictions, (wherein we complain we can get no good,) than all means. It brings us into his fellowship, 1. Quickly; as Christ was caught up, so the soul by Christ to himself. 2. Immediately; for the next thing we shall see is Christ himself, our husband himself; and then see the kingdom, and then wonder at the Lord. 3. Everlastingly — never to part more. O, fear it not, therefore; Christ has sweetened it to you.

Section V.

Use 3. Hence see a clear foundation and groundwork of longing for fellowship with the Lord Jesus in his ordinances here. This is that I shall exhort to. For, —

1. You can not, shall not, must not now go to him in heaven, nor enjoy fellowship with him, nor meet him in the clouds, though you do long for that day; but in his ordinances you may meet

with him now. And truly those whom we love and long for, if we can not go to their house or find them at home, we are glad to meet with them abroad. As with those who stand before princes, if we can not be with them on the throne, or at court, we will desire to be with them in the country, nay, on the dunghill. O, the spirit of David! (Ps. xxvii. 4,) "One thing have I desired, and that I will seek for," though I never have it. What is that, David? Is it to wear the crown in Jerusalem? Is it to have all thine enemies lick the dust of thy feet? Is it to have thy name spread, and thine honor great through all the kingdoms of the world? No; but "that I may dwell in the courts of the Lord's house all the days of my life," and that seeing I can not, shall not die presently, and so go to see his glory in heaven, therefore, that I may see his beauty here, enjoy him here, and that not for some years, but all the days of my life.

2. Ought you not to long to taste and pass through the sorrows of death, that you may be with him? And are Christ's ordinances more bitter than death, that you are loth to break through the difficulty of them, that in them you may enjoy him? The truth is, so it is with many a man, that such is the strength of his hidden contempt of Christ, and his love to his sloth, that he had rather die than pray, and be damned eternally than to follow the Lord in an ordinance till he has found him graciously. How come God's own people to lament this, if there were not this?

3. I remember a sweet speech of one with God, "That a Christian ought to prepare for a sacrament as he would prepare to die; for," saith he, "there is but this difference: when we die we go to Christ; in a sacrament Christ comes to us." What he said of a sacrament, I say of every ordinance: in every ordinance Christ comes to us; when we die we go to him. Now, ought you to long, when you are absent, to be with him, and will you not care for him, nor long to see him, and enjoy him, when he comes to you? and so be worse than poor naked Indians. Christ comes not to them, no dews fall down on their Gilboas, no manna at their tent doors, and hence they live without him, and desire him not; and when he comes to you, do you see no beauty in him now why you should desire him? Will you thus requite him for his love, O foolish children and unwise?

4. Truly, beloved, you can have but little evidence you do desire the Lord Jesus's company in heaven at the last day, that long not vehemently after him in his ordinances now. "You have followed me in the regeneration," saith Christ, (Matt. xix. 28,) therefore "you shall sit with me upon thrones." If Christ's

presence here, a little of himself be burdensome, what will it be in heaven, then? "Depart from me," saith Christ; "I was in prison and you visited me not." Shall you depart for not visiting an imprisoned, persecuted, sick, sorrowful Christ, in midst of miseries; and shall not you depart for not visiting a comforting Christ, a teaching Christ, an entreating, embracing Christ, in the midst of his ordinances? If the Lord tries you with water, with a little of himself here, and you care not for him, long not after him, and hence let all leak out again, how shall the Lord trust you with wine? with full fruition of himself in heaven?

5. O beloved, have you ever found him in the ordinances? If not, O, the heavy wrath of the Lord Jesus upon thee! If you have; if ever he has comforted thee when sad and sorrowful; if ever quickened thee when death and darkness did lie upon thee; if ever he did deliver thee when distressed, O, then take heed of despising him in his ordinances now, but long for him again, "That I may see thee as I have seen thee." Ps. lxiii. 2. Let them that never found him deal so with him. Peter, when he saw Christ's glory on the mount, "Lord," saith he, "it is good for us to be here." Has the Lord ever transfigured himself before thee, so as he has appeared in another manner to thee in his ordinances than ever thou sawest before? Then say, seeing, Lord, I can not come to heaven to thee, it is good being in the mount, in thy ordinances with thee; it is good being here. 1 Pet. ii. 2–4. I know, brethren, you have many employments in the world, and are called away to them, and can not ever be with the Lord; yet let your longings be there; nay, though cast out of God's sight, yet look to the temple; this will give you peace.

6. This, if I may have leave to speak plainly, is the great sin, one of them, of New England. Men come over hither for ordinances, and when they have them, neglect them; or if it be too horrible to live in a gross neglect of them, yet who maintains his fellowship with Christ, or longing after the fellowship of Christ in them? And, therefore, I shall stay a while on this point. Men that are sick of consumptions have sometimes a mighty stomach after meat; and, when it is brought them, they are weary of the very smell of it, and then say, Truly I had thought I could have eaten so much; so men loathe ordinances, nay, the cooks that dress, and the dish that brings, and the ministry of Christ Jesus that provides the meat, because consuming and pining away in their iniquities. I know many use ordinances; but are they not indifferent whether they find him therein or no? Now, —

1. When men had enough by them to live comfortably upon,

then God and his ordinances were desired by them; but here men's removing begetting want, want of the creature, joined with fear and distrust of God's providence to provide for them and theirs, either sink their hearts, that ordinances are not sweet, no more than Moses' message to a people in anguish, or meat to a wounded man; or else makes them hungry after the creature, and hence lavishing out their desires, that they have none after the Lord himself.

2. When men are persecuted by enemies, driven into corners, or to towns six miles off, to find a sacrament or hear a sermon, then the gospel of peace, and them that brought the glad tidings of peace, their feet were beautiful; and then men thought, if one Sabbath here so sweet, where ordinances are much corrupted, if some of them be so comfortable in the midst of enemies, O, how sweet to enjoy them all among saints, among friends! And so I know they be to some, and, I hope, to more than I know; but New England's peace and plenty of means breeds strange security; and hence prayer is neglected here. There are no enemies to hunt you to heaven, nor chains to make you cry; hence the gospel and Christ in it is slighted. Why? Here are no sour herbs to make the lamb sweet. And if I get no good this Sabbath, this sermon, this sacrament, this prayer, I hope I shall some other time, when my heart is better and my business is over; not considering that the days of trouble may be near, or God's final farewell may be quickly taken.

3. It was a sad speech of a brother lately, which has oft affected me, that "a man may pray out, hear out all the grace of his heart." Meaning this, when God begins to work upon a man's heart at first, then prayer and word is sweet; stay a while, they hear out their hearing, and pray out their praying; so, as in praying they pray not, and in hearing they hear not. Would to God there were not a generation of those men among us, that, having been so oft sermon-trod and prayer-beaten, that now their hearts are hardened, and being used to ordinances, and being so long ridden under them, I wish they were not tired and jaded under them before they come half way home, that they had rather lie and die in the highway than get up, and, with mighty groans and invincible wrestlings of heart, seek after and so find the Lord in them.

4. There is no place in all the world where there is such expectation to find the Lord as here; and hence men bless the Lord for our rising sun when it is setting every where else. Here, therefore, they come and find it not; hence not considering the great and last temptation of this place, whereby God

tries his friends before he will trust them with more of himself, viz., deep and frequent desertions; they give in, and therefore care not for, nor desire after, those plasters which they feel heal them not, nor that food which they find nourisheth them not. It is strange to see what a faith some men have that can close with Christ as their end, and comfort themselves there. It is not means, (say they,) but Christ; not duties, but Christ; and by this faith can comfort and quiet themselves in the neglect and contempt of Christ in means — as infallible a brand of God's eternal reprobation of such a soul as any I know. So that this is New England's sin. Is not prayer neglected, wanting place and heart? If not in family, is it not in secret? yet doth it not die? Didst thou ever find thy spirit so straitened? Where are the mighty groans? What is become of meditation? Dost thou not let Sabbaths, sermons pass over, which shall be preached over again at the last day, and find no Christ, no Spirit in them; and thus lie famishing, and yet not cry for bread? If it be not so, I am glad; God, angels, saints, and all the world shall call you blessed. If it be so, I dare be bold to prophesy ruin to this place and people, and that you or your posterity shall, either in woods, or in the land, or in the hands of your enemies in this place, lament with tears the contempt of means; and you, even disciples of Christ, "shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see them." Jer. viii. 13, 14, "Let us go into strongholds," etc. I know there are many that do meet the Lord; but are you not apt to fall asleep again? O, therefore, let me entreat you, if the Lord has espoused you to himself, if you have any longings after him in heaven, seeing those desires can not be fulfilled presently, O, long to meet him here, and so long to meet him as that you may indeed meet with him, and with more and more of him.

Section VI.

Quest. What is it to meet Christ, and to have fellowship with him in his ordinances?

Ans. I have been oft asked this, and for the sake of them that be weak, I shall give you a taste of it.

1. Therefore, look as it is with a man that receives any common mercy from God, from Christ, if he sees not the Lord Jesus really giving it, he enjoys it, but not Christ in it, though he get some good out of the thing. So let a man receive more knowledge of truths, and more truth be discovered, more promises revealed, more affections and life dropped into the heart, which

may do a man some good; yet if he sees them as separated from Christ, if he sees not the truth as it is in Jesus, if he sees not promises spoken from heaven by Jesus, if he looks not on all commands as part of the secret of Jesus, if he receive affections, and by them behold not the Lord Jesus, he doth not at that time enjoy the Lord Jesus. For he now, indeed, enjoys his gifts; but by these he doth not enjoy him. And, therefore, then a man may be said to have fellowship with Christ in an ordinance, when by all the light and life and comfort there, he comes to see him, and sees them all in him, and seeing a transcendent glory in him, sees and beholds a hidden glory in them. This command is a secret of Jesus, this promise the sweet voice of Jesus, these consolations the comforts of Jesus, these messengers the ministers of Jesus, these ordinances the kingdom of Jesus. And, therefore, look throughout all the Scriptures, you shall see our fellowship with Christ, both in heaven and here; it is expressed by "seeing of the Lord." John xvii. 24; Ps. lxiii. 2, and xvii. 4. I have oft said to my friends, the great sin of Christians is to see scriptures, ordinances, truths, commands, blows, kindnesses, as not flowing from and abiding in the Lord Jesus, to see them separate from Christ, and not Christ and them together; and hence promises comfort not, because you receive them not as spoken by Jesus. Commands awe not, because not as the voice of Jesus; every truth is not dear, because you see it not as the Bridegroom's voice. Parents that have had rude children have turned them out of doors; they themselves have sent them clothes and money out of pity, but themselves have not been seen, that they might seek for a father's house at last. So when God is angry with some of his people, he doth send to them in his providences and ordinances, because he pities them, but himself is not seen. Why? That at last they might come home, and seek to see his face again, and say, What good does all this do me, if I see no God? I confess, he that receives gifts from another ought to be thankful; but a heart that loves and longs after the Lord will say, Here is blessing, means, truth, warmth; but, Lord, when wilt thou come thyself? O, labor for this.

2. When a man feels the power of the Lord Jesus in his ordinances. This is the second part of David's desire, (Ps. lxiii. 2, 3,) "That I may see," not only thy glory, but "thy power;" for there is never a child of God but feels a strong party within him against Christ, so that he can not seek Christ, cleave to Christ, live to Christ. Now, you will find in some ordinances your hearts shaken and troubled for sin, and some

desires and consolations stirred up, and hopes never to be as you have been. But, beloved, all dies and falls down again. Now, I confess there is somewhat of Christ in all this; but yet content not yourselves with this, because you want a power, or until you find a mighty power of Christ, by little and little, subduing sin; for when Christ comes into the heart, indeed, he comes with his power. Ps. xxiv. 7, 8, "The Lord of hosts, mighty in battle." "His flesh is meat indeed." Col. i. 29. Christ's power works in a man mightily. If you enjoy never such comfort, but find not a power in pulling down thy lusts, there is no Christ. If a man be sick, and he eats his meat, and great care be had to tend him, but the disease is stronger than the strength of nature and food, ask him, Do you eat? Yes, but it doth me no good; so here. Such comfort, such a Christ doth you no good, unless you feel a power. O, long to meet Christ and enjoy Christ thus.

Quest. How shall I do this?

Ans. 1. Mourn bitterly for the Lord's absence, as for one of the greatest evils that can befall thee. For Christ's presence will never be sweet to him that can live without him; and can you look for him then? John xvi. 22, "You have now sorrow which," he said, "filled their hearts, but I will see you again," visit you, come down to you by my Spirit again, and you shall rejoice, and none shall take it away. And, therefore, it is noted, the first that had comfort was Mary, when she sat at the sepulcher weeping. John xx. 11, etc. And, therefore, do but observe your own hearts, when your hearts have been soaked in grief, for want of or for the absence of Christ; O, I have lived without him, and prayed without him, and heard without him, and spoke without him, him that hath pitied me, spared me, overcome me, laid down his life, sent his Spirit to me — that then you shall more or less see the Lord, and feel the power and presence of the Lord. O, beloved, shall not heaven be sweet to you without him? and shall earth be sweeter than heaven, that you can live here without him? Beloved, whatever you account of it now, in hell the sting of all sorrows shall be this — O, Christ hides his face! One frown shall be more bitter than death, than a thousand deaths; and shall it be so in hell? and shall not many frowns many days be more bitter than death? Shall it be so to devils, and not to saints? Shall the hiding of Christ's face from enemies be heavy, and shall not his friends take it to heart? If you do not, then think not to meet him, but that word and prayer shall be dead drink to thee; but if you do, I tell thee, if he manifests himself to any, he will reveal himself to thee.

2. Prize and love his presence, his face, the lifting up of the light of his countenance. Princes will not come; or if they do, not stay; or if they perceive their company is a burden, and not esteemed; no more will the Lord Jesus. They that are fallen in love together will find out each other, though it be at midnight; prize Christ's company, and you will not complain for want of time, and say you can not; but you will find him out in word, in prayers, though others be fast asleep. Matt. xiii. 44. When the man "sells all," now he "buys the field," has it, and enjoys it. You would have the Lord's company; I believe you; but what will you give for it? I will tell you. It may be you will give him the hearing for it, and give him a few good wishes, and a few good words, and a little leisure. But will you turn the whole world behind your back, and whatever you have out of doors, that he may come in? That now it is not honor, nor wealth, nor life, nor ease, nor heaven, but him, and that not only in heaven, but in his swaddling-clouts, his ordinances here; believe it, salvation is at your doors. Zaccheus, being a low man of stature, gets out of the crowd, stands in the way, and the Lord bids him come down. Do thus when you come to any ordinance; I tell you, it is better than a host of angels compassing thee about with praises. O that you had the life of experience! Hast thou not found him better than friends, than means, than thyself? O that you would believe experience!

3. Make it not your task, but your trade, to look for him, that you may enjoy him here. Make this your business. Men make it not their main business to seek out Christ, but only some work they must despatch by the by. They make it not their trade, but their talk, which must be done. Esau would have the blessing, but it is his hunting that he delights in. You shall have a man that is a close worldling come and hear and joy therein; but his trade, his heart is after that. Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Look but on a Christian at his first conversion; what great gains gets he then? O, it is his trade to follow the Lord; afterward he is idle, and then feels little. Matt. xiii. 46. Like a merchant, he ventures all, and then finds. Now, you shall find him. Heb. xi. 6. "He is the rewarder," not of them that "seek him" sluggishly, but "diligently." What do you else seek for? "Why spend your money for that which is not bread?" Or if there be aught else that is necessary, let thy care be for him, and his care shall be for thee.

4. Look before thou comest to an ordinance, if there be no lust, no stumbling-block of iniquity that thou harborest in thy heart, or sufferest to remain in the sight of God. Is. lix. 1, 2.

I have known in experience, and seen it in Scripture, of God's people and others have taken on that God hides his face, etc. And this has been found to be the cause, either some sin not yet subdued or mortified, or some sin that they have not gone for pardon of to the blood of Christ, and so unpardoned. When both these have been removed, the Lord has appeared. Exod. xxiv. 10. After the covenant made by blood, "they saw the God of Israel." Ezek. xiv. 3, "Should I be inquired of by them that set the stumbling-block of their iniquities?" etc. Come, therefore, to an ordinance, that the Lord would take away thy sin; do not come to it that you may be comforted in your sin, so that, though there be sin in your heart, yet the Lord will not cast that in thy dish, when thou comest to him to take it away. It may be you know none. "You know not what spirit you are of." Get the Lord to discover it thee.

5. O, be thankful, and cleave the closer to Christ for a little. For that is the infinite mercy and love of Christ to his people, he lets them see their end, the hight of grace and glory the Lord will bring them to; but makes them feel the want of it, and taste but a little but the first fruits. Now, there is Satan's policy to make them slight what they have, because they have not what they would have. Hence, Christ estranges himself greatly. Do you thus despise my love? O, therefore, cleave close to him for that little, and then see, (John i. 50,) "Thou shalt see greater things than these, — the Son of God, and angels ascending and descending on him." Think that I feel or have the sense of any want of grace, and peace, and mercy, and Christ; O, it is mercy. That I have the star, O, this is mercy, this brought them to Christ himself afterward. O, unthankfulness stops God's heart. God will never cease pouring out on thee that art pouring out praises on him; for else man's kindness should exceed the Lord's.

Thus you see the means; now use them, and long for the Lord Jesus in them, and so long as that you may meet him; and do it presently, else you may seek and not find him, and "die in your sins." John viii. 21. A sad and heavy speech. Has God singled you out of all people in the world to enjoy him, and will you now forsake him, and be eaten up with your lots, and buried in the bellies of your beasts, or sit grieving that your estates are sunk? It may be hypocrites will forsake the Lord Jesus, but "will you also depart?" Others care not for him, others long not after him, others give him no meeting; will you depart? "Lord, to whom shall we go?" O, and long for more of him; "forget what is behind," and hear and pray as if thou never

didst so before, as if but now to begin. There is a plot afoot to make you loathe ordinances, that so God may loathe you. Men that are sick and like to die can eat no common wholesome meat, but are now nourished by conserves, and alkermes, and spirits of gold; so when wholesome truths of God are despised, men are deadly sick, when any new-fangled device shall feed their fancy. The Lord keep you from it. O, do you love and long for the Lord in them the more, for his Spirit, his love, his truth, his Christ, his company, his grace, his consolations? and then, when death comes, you shall not need to fear it, but make it welcome; and, when conscience shall ask, Do you think to be with the Lord? O, it shall be in thy bosom, Lord, thee have I longed for, thee have I sought for, wept for here, because I could not come to thee presently in heaven. Now, Lord, let me come to thee, and so go triumphing to glory.

Section VII.

Use 7. Hence we see no Christian ought to content himself with any measure of knowledge or fellowship with the Lord Jesus here. For if full, perfect, and immediate fellowship with him in heaven, and at the last day, ought to be the mark he aims at, and journey's end of all his desires, then he is not to sit down in the midway, but to breathe and aspire after still more and more of him. Thus Paul, though fully sealed with the Spirit, yet he makes this his mark. Phil. iii. 14–16; 1 Pet. i. 10–13. The apostle tells them, the prophet looked after "the grace given in" their times; "therefore gird up your loins, and hope perfectly for grace to be given you at the revelation of Christ Jesus." Men that have preferment in their eye, and are to come on by degrees to it, never content themselves with any (though they will not slight what they have) until they come to their highest. You are born to great hopes; slight not what you have, but look after more. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

Hence three sorts are to be greatly blamed. For as it is with sinful lusts, so it is with spiritual; they are endless, infinite, and insatiable; if they want, they are not satisfied; if they have, they are whet on in their appetites after more. O, let it be so here.

1. Some there be that are so far from thirsting after more of him, that they have forsaken his fellowship, and lie still, content it should be so. Time was horror was upon their consciences, trouble in their minds, and heat of affection lasted, that their prayers were many, their tears abundant; they could not take

their rest in the night, but pray they must; they could not hear of a sermon but through wet and dry to it; and it may be the Lord "drew them with the cords of a man," and laid meat before them, and sweetened their labors with great hopes to them; but the Father not having drawn them with an invincible power, and knit them by an indissoluble union to Christ, they are now fallen off from Christ. John vi. 66. And if you observe it, he looks not after them, speaks not one word to them, because content to be without him. Would to God this were not the tempers of saints that know it was better with you once than now, and God "hedgeth your way with thorns," and gives you no rest. But, O, the grievous wrecks of professors. One can see some boards and planks at low water, but that is all. Jer. ii. 13, 14. The Lord will fetch you home if he loves you, by weeping cross.

2. Some there are that fall not to forsake the Lord, but like the door on the hinge, and wheel on the pin, hang and turn about where they did. This God's own people are very apt to do, and hence the apostle wisheth them to take heed of it, from a dreadful argument. Heb. vi. 4–7.

First. Because the Lord at first conversion draws his people sweetly, drives them gently; being weak and young infants, as yet keeps them in his arms, that they may find a greater good in him than in the world; but afterward he suffers Satan to tempt, himself deserts them, leads through a wilderness of sins and miseries, that they may know what is in their own hearts. Hence, now, if they will have mercy, they must fetch it, fight for it, and overcome. Now, hence sloth is apt to prevail for a time, as with the disciples.

Secondly. Because, before they have Christ, they feel a total want, afterward but a partial, and hence apt to be full and self-confident in what they have, their stomachs are staid by some bits, and hence the Lord is fain to withdraw the feeling of all that which they had before, that they, feeling how soon that vanishes, might hunger after more; as the disciples could have been content with Christ's being upon earth with them, then saith he, "The Spirit will not come;" hence away he goes, that they might have more of him in the Spirit. But this is too common with many hypocrites.

1. When men serve their turn of Christ. There is never a hypocrite living but closeth with Christ for his own ends; for he can not work beyond his principle. Now, when men have served their own turns out of another man, away they go, and keep that which they have. A hypocrite closeth with Christ

as a man with a rich shop; he will not be at cost to buy all the shop, but so much as serves his turn. Commonly, men in horror seek for so much of Christ as will ease them, and hence profess and hence seek for so much of Christ as will credit them, and hence their desires after Christ are soon satisfied. *Appetitus finis est infinitus.*

2. No hypocrite, though he closeth with Christ, and for a time grow up in knowledge of and communion with Christ, but he hath at that time hidden lusts, and thorns that overgrow his growings, and choke all at last; and in conclusion mediates a league between Christ and his lusts, and seeks to reconcile them together. Christ saith, Out with every lust, and let more of myself come. No, saith sin, let me stay here; remember what ease, what honor I bring you; I can not leave you. Now, a man moderates; I will keep my lust, because I love it; but I will keep it as my burden, that I may have Christ with it. Christ calls to seek for more of him; lust saith, No; the work is hard, and duties are difficult. And it is, it may be, to no purpose to seek; you have other irons in the fire, many worldly businesses. Now, here men moderate; do not say thou wilt seek no more after him, nor, indeed, use means diligently for more of him; be sure only you give him some desires to be better, and this will serve the turn. The Lord Jesus wooes many a soul whom he never matches himself unto; one comes and wins the heart afterward, and makes the match; so here. The lusts of a man's heart grow sweeter than Christ and his ordinances, and hence there is no heart to seek after more of Christ when the match is once made with the world, and affections won. 2 Tim. iv. 10.

3. Some seek for more of Christ, but it is of an idol Christ, not as manifesting himself in and by a word. For look as any act of obedience is an act of will-worship and imagery, that we have not a particular demand for, or is not directly deducted from rule in the word; so that act of faith is an act of will-worship, which sees and chooses Christ as his own, when he has not a particular promise for it; it is an imagination of Christ, not Christ; and you have more of your own imagination, not more of the Lord Jesus. 1 Pet. i. 25. Monks had sublime contemplations of God. Luther calls them such as looked upon a *Deus et Christibus absolutus*, not beholding the beams of his love and glory in the word. O, therefore, labor for more of such a Christ as the word holds forth. And look as in heaven, —

First. They are all one with him in fellowship, the Father in him, and he in them, and they in him, and so made perfect in one.

Secondly. They have his fellowship only. So do you long for more of his fellowship, so as to be made more one with him and him with you, so as he may be your strength and life and peace, and for his fellowship only; otherwise you may go without him at last; (Luke xiii. 26, 27,) "Have we not eat and drank in thy presence?" etc. The Jews before Christ's coming had Christ's presence then, but a greater measure of it is given to the church since his resurrection and glorification; for it was reserved to honor Christ in his first coming. But how many are there that see not the Lord Jesus so as they did under vails? Either get more, or say Christ is not risen. John xiv. 16. Christ promises to send his disciples another Comforter. Who was that? The Spirit of truth, whom the world could not receive, because it knew him not. Why, had the disciples no Spirit now? Yes; he was in them, but not that full measure with which they were not as yet sealed; yet they knew they had him, and that Christ was theirs too. So hast thou the Spirit of the Lord Jesus? O, beg for more of it, not for miraculous gifts, for that is in vain; but more of the special powerful presence and fullness of it; for it is that the world can not receive. I have oft feared that it is the great sin of this last age to comfort and settle Christians in their weak beginnings, as though there were no more of God's Spirit to be poured down in times of the gospel. But consider,—

First. What came you into this wilderness to see? Reeds shaken with the wind? No; for more of the Lord Jesus; and will you now forget the end for which you come? It may be you never found less; no, but God is emptying of you, that you might seek for more. Herod a long time desired to see Jesus, and then despised him.

Secondly. You have here more means to have fellowship with the Lord, and will you content yourself with what you have had? If you do, what can you look for, but that the Lord should take away ordinances, if they do you no more good, and ease you of the burden of the Lord of hosts, or send sore and heavy trials? It is that I have oft thought of, why are the wicked exalted and saints debased? The worst are not bad enough to receive their plagues, nor the best good enough to partake of blessings. You have had some means to do you some good; here you have more, that you may receive more good, more life, more of Christ Jesus; if not, then look for fire to purge you if you be gold, or flames to devour you if you be but rottenness and stubble. But is this thus? The Jews did long for Christ, and when he came they crucified him: they loved the prophets; they shall have prophets

and their blood too, to slay them. You love the messengers of Christ, etc.; they have them, Lord, but despise them; they have them, but condemn them; they have them, and though they will not cast them out of their places, yet they will so weary their spirits, and grieve thy Spirit in them, that they will make them glad to bury themselves and leave their places. You shall have prophets and their blood, too, and their tears and sorrows, too. But why do I complain? Let me persuade. O, labor for more of Christ in his servants, in his ordinances, in his providences, in his saints, until, at last, thy desires break thy vessel, and carry thee up to behold the Lord in heaven. If there were never saving work of grace wrought, but thou hast only rested in duties without Christ, now sell thyself out of all for him. If there be any that the Lord has settled there on his promise, which never can be shaken, hold your steadfastness, but yet still grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Section VIII.

Use 5. Of Exhort. O, long to be with the Lord Jesus! Before a man has Christ, now his desires should be to have him; when he has Christ, now his longing should be to be with him. Do thus in this place, especially in this age. I have oft thought one great end of God's bringing his own people into this place is to learn them to die and be with Christ. Men have heard of Christ, and passed through the waves of death, and stood many a week within six inches of death to see Christ here. Well, when you come here, God visits you with troubles, temptations, losses, desertions, fears for future times. Here it may be you see (as some see) an "end of all perfection," church builders, church ordinances, church professors, etc.; or, if they find the Lord, it is soon gone; why, all is that you might long to be at home.

Motive 1. The Lord when he called Abraham out of his own country to his friends, he followed the Lord he knew not whither. You live now out of your father's house and from all your friends that long to see you; nay, are left among enemies, and you know whither you are to go — "to God, the Judge of all, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Motive 2. Look but upon the men of this world; they long for things here, though but temporal, though they have no Christ. O, long for this, though thou hast no world.

Motive 3. When Christ would needs go to Jerusalem, (John

xi. 16,) saith Thomas, "Let us go and die with him," and shall not we go to live with him?

Motive 4. Did Moses forsake Egypt's honors, treasures, and embraced the reproach of Christ, as far better? O, if God should set thee up in a throne, O, depart from it to enjoy the glory of Christ himself in glory.

Motive 5. Grant death be dreadful, yet when soldiers see their captain upon the walls, among the enemies, they will press hard after to follow, though they die in the breach. To part with sin is bitter, or to part with Christ; but to part with the body for a time, and cast off the clothes, this will be found to be exceeding sweet.

Motive 6. Friends that send to us, and provide for us in a desert place, we long to see them. Now, who has clothed thee, comforted, pardoned, revived, found thee, kept thee, that nothing hath hurt thee; nay, that thy sins have humbled thee, and done thee good? O, it is Christ. Wilt thou not say, Who and where is he that doth all this?

Motive 7. O, consider how glad the Lord Jesus will be of thee, though the world and thou art weary of thyself. Zeph. iii. 17. Luke x. 21, "I thank thee, O Father." So will the Lord say then.

Means 1. Labor for assurance that Christ is thine, else you will fear death and hell that follows it; and such an assurance as does not only chase away vexation and anguish of spirit, but fears, at least, in the power of them; for there is many a Christian can find the proposition true in the world, "He that comes to Christ he will not cast away." The Spirit clears God's work and his own experience, and saith, "Thou comest unto Christ." Now, when he comes to make the conclusion, though he dares not sin against clear light and evidence of the Spirit, and conclude, "Yet I shall be cast away," yet he dares not, nor can not, for a time, conclude fully. Why? Because of some fears. What if I should be mistaken, and when I die all prove nought? And while this fear lasts, you will not long (till needs must) to be with Christ; for while you fear or suspect Christ as an enemy, you will not heartily love him, nor long to be with him; therefore get these fears removed.

Quest. How may this be?

Ans. (Rom. viii. 15, 16,) By the Spirit of adoption only; for though I do not exclude the work of sanctified reason from the witness of the Spirit, yet this I say, that all the men in the world, nor all the wisdom and reason of man, can never chase away all fears, scatter all mists, till the Spirit itself saith, Peace,

and be still, and puts its hand and seal to the evidence; till the Spirit, not by an audible, but powerful voice, shows and persuades. Acts xii. 13–16. They had been praying for Peter; Peter knocks; the damsel saith, Peter is there. Now, see their unbelief after such a mighty spirit of prayer: "It is his angel," say they, and could not be persuaded till he came in and showed himself. So the soul is praying; a man's own spirit goes out, and sees there is more unbelief and fear; say, No; it is a delusion. Well, the Spirit still knocks, and the soul opens, and then he comes in, and the soul is astonished. And, that you may have it, —

1. See there be no guilt upon thy conscience, no reservation, love, liking to some lust. Heb. x. 22. For these fears are commonly the fruit of guilt which is not washed away, but "by the blood of sprinkling."

2. Pray for the Spirit, (Ps. lxxxv. 4–9,) say they; 1. "Turn us from sin. 2. Turn from thy wrath;" when the Father is angry, then no good word. 3. The end, "That our hearts may rejoice in thee. 4. Show us mercy." 5. Then they come to listen after it; for many times a friend speaks not, because he has us not alone.

3. Mourn heavily for want of it, (Ps. li. 8,) and so look for it in a word.

Means 2. Labor to partake of the fellowship of Christ's resurrection, else no desires can be raised up. Col. iii. 1, 2.

Quest. What is that?

Ans. Look, as we then have fellowship with Christ, and with the church in miseries, when we, from the serious apprehension of their sorrows, condole and suffer with them, so with Christ in glory, when, from serious deep apprehensions of his glory, we reign with him, we are risen with him; for let a man be assured Christ is not his, if he knows not what the worth and glory of his fellowship is, a man will then never long to be with him. O, therefore, labor to comprehend this glory of the Lord Jesus, and that by the Spirit of revelation. Eph. i. 17, 18. The word reveals the glory of saints, that there is a kingdom, that they shall be "perfect in one," that they shall have that glory the Father has given to Christ. John xvii. 22. O, get the Spirit to show thee the thing what this is, else something in the world will make you look back. There are false spies, that vilify God's kingdom to his saints. O, say it is a good God, and country, and Christ, and mercy, and love; "let me go up and possess it." O, get the Lord to give thee but one glimpse of this.

Thus much of the first verse.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHOWING THAT THERE ARE HYPOCRITES IN THE BEST AND PUREST CHURCHES.

Ver. 2. *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*

SECTION I.

FROM this second verse to the fifth there is set down the difference appearing between the virgins, wherein the Lord, the searcher of hearts, makes an open discovery of the particular estates of these virgins, for all the best churches especially to take notice of, to the second coming of the Lord Jesus. This difference is set down, —

1. Generally, in this second verse.
2. Particularly, in the third and fourth verses.

I. Generally, in this verse.

1. That some of them were sincere and wise-hearted, to the number of five.

2. Others of them were foolish and false-hearted, to the number of five more. So that the sum is this: one half of them were indeed virgins, another half were in appearance virgins; the one part were virgins in the sight of God, who saith they are wise; the other were so in the judgment of man, and hence called foolish ones. In this general description, therefore, of them, we may note, —

First. Their description from the number of each sort, viz., five.

Secondly. From their different qualities or qualifications — holy wisdom or prudence in the one, sinful folly in the other. He does not say five were holy and five profane; five were friends to the bridegroom, five were persecutors of him; but "five were wise and five were foolish." Why the virgins are described by the number of ten, I spake before; either because it was a perfect number, and so signifies the estate of all virgin churches, or because it was the custom not to exceed the number of ten, to honor them at their marriage. Now, why five of them were wise, and five foolish, as though the one half of them only were sincere, the other false, this seems to carry the face of truth; but I am fearful to rack and torment parables, wherein I chiefly look unto the scope, and that is this, that not one or two, but a great part of them were sincere, and a great part of them false. And

hence the observations out of these words are these, omitting all the rest.

Observ. 1. That when the churches of Christ Jesus prove virgin churches, and are most pure, yet even then there will be some secret hypocrites that shall mingle themselves with them. Or there will be a number of hypocrites mingling themselves with the purest churches.

Observ. 2. That when the churches are virgin churches, the hypocrites in those times will be evangelical. Or the secret hypocrites of pure churches are evangelical.

Observ. 3. That there are certain special, saving qualifications of heart, whereby arises a great internal difference between sincere-hearted virgins and the closest hypocrite.

Observ. 4. That the spring, or one main principle of evangelical sincerity or hypocrisy, lies in the understanding or mind of man.

Section II.

Observ. 1. That there is and will be a mixture of close hypocrites with the wise-hearted virgins in the purest churches.

This I might manifest out of several scriptures, from several times. Look but upon Josias's time, when there was as great a reformation as under any king before him, (2 Kings xxiii. 25;) yet Jer. iii. 10, and iv. 3, 4. Look on the apostle's time, and what apostasy afterward. The apostle complained of it, "Every one seek their own." Phil. ii. 21. "Many walk," etc., (Phil. iii. 18, 19,) whom he could not think on "without tears." The mystery of iniquity began to work even then. Christ manifests this by divers parables; (Matt. xxii. 14,) "Many are called," and so called as to come in, and so sit, and not to be known till the Lord looks on them. And here the wise-hearted could not discern and keep out, but opened the door for the five foolish. Look as it is said, (Job i. 6,) "There was a day the sons of God presented themselves before the Lord, and Satan came in also;" so here. I shall not, do not speak of every particular church, but of the state of the churches in general. For it is possible there may be a Philadelphia, "a new Jerusalem which comes down from heaven," a "golden foundation," and for a time "no hay nor stubble built upon it." But this is rare, and not usual nor general.

Section III.

Reason 1. From Satan, the ancient enemy of the purity of the church; he being an unclean creature himself, if he could he

would make heaven itself unclean; but that is beyond his reach; hence he seeks to make heaven on earth unclean; hence he will get into paradise, and if he can not come in the shape of a man, yet in that of a serpent to beguile and pollute innocency there. He will follow Christ into the wilderness, and tempt him there, and hence will seek to get into churches, to pollute them. And if he can not pollute the church by unclean ordinances, he will then seek to defile it by unclean persons. Matt. xiii. 25. The tares be in Judea like the wheat, yet indeed annoy the wheat. And how come they here? They are sown there, i. e., hid for a time, and mingled, and die there, too. Who does this? Why, the enemy did it, so that Satan will do it. If there be a devil in the church, he will sow his tares.

Object. But we see him not.

Ans. No; it is therefore said "he went away;" his care is over; now they are sown. Look as it is the Jesuits' policy, at this day, the end of their order is to raise up the collapsed ruins of Rome, and to bring all Christendom — and if it be possible all the world — to the hellish bondage and blind obedience of the see of Rome. Hence some kingdoms, because they can not conquer them by power, they seek to do it by craft; hence they seek to lay their leaven and make their party within, from whom they may have intelligence, and hence they shall do well enough with them. So Satan, seeking the ruin of the church, seeks to make his party within the church, for one of these three ends chiefly.

1. Either that he may divide the church, that when any error shall be hatched, he may have his party to maintain it, and his faction to plead for it. Or, —

2. That he may corrupt it, if he can not divide it, that the tares may suck out the heart, and life, and power of godliness in the hearts of the elect; for you know it is not the brier, but the ivy, that sucks out the life and sap of the tree; and it is not profane, pricking persecutors, but seeming friends to the church, that suck out the heart and life of it. It was not Jeroboam's greatness, but the old prophet's gravity and seeming piety that sucked out the spirit and sap of the young prophet. 1 Kings xiii. That so by this little leaven he may defile the whole lump, and so provoke wrath against them all.

3. If he can not do either, yet that he may blur and stain the glory of the church; for the greatest glory in the world is to see a temple built, not of stones, or gold, or pearl, but of living precious saints, holy to the Lord only and his Son, and the sight of which in heaven shall be one part of the glory in heaven. Hence Satan will do what he can to blur it; that though the

greatest glory God has shines in his church, yet that he may blur it: and hence Jude saith, "Some that crept in unawares were spots in their feasts;" and, (2 Pet. ii. 2,) "By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Reason 2. From the officers chiefly of a church, who, when they should be full of eyes, as they are described, (Rev. iv.,) and these eyes should be ever watching, they are then sleeping. Matt. xiii. 25. For it is not the having, so much as the acting of grace that helps men to read and understand the book of the Scriptures, and the book of men's hearts and lives. 2 Pet. i. 9. Hence in affliction and temptation we know the Lord, and his mind, and our own hearts, and the world best. When Jonathan eats the honey, "his eyes are open." Now, sometimes the watchmen are not acting, or watching, but sleeping, and hence those are taken for wheat, that indeed are but tares. The book has a fair superscription or frontispiece, and they so sleepy they do not read it through, and so either see no fault at all, or, if any, they be but errata in the printing, and weaknesses to be borne with; or if they do, yet the man is commended, and has a name to live, when, indeed, he is dead, and so this serves the turn; and though he comes in, yet they shall do well enough with him, though, indeed, they herein have but a wolf by the ears.

Reason 3. In regard of hypocrites themselves, who must be like themselves, ever to act for their own ends; for they ever have an evil eye; now it makes for their ends, to join themselves to the purest churches of the Lord Jesus.

1. Sometimes it makes for their honor. Hence you know the church of Sardis lost her power of life, for that is a burden; yet kept their name to live, for that is an honor. For if men live out of church fellowship, that is a great shame, and now they have little love from saints; indeed, the wicked may honor them, but what is that to the honor of the whole church? Who would think Saul should have cared for Samuel, that dealt so plainly and sharply with him? Yet, "O, honor me before this people;" that is the business. There are many excellent gifts Christ pours down upon his church. "Simon believes also," (Acts viii.,) and would give any money for those gifts, that he might be wondered at as he was before. A man seeing other gifts, and the love they have thereby, even a Simon may desire such gifts, and a mighty power of grace to animate those gifts, and would give any money for this, that he may be wondered at. Some refined, polished spirits scorn honor of base men; and hence fish for it elsewhere.

2. Their gain. It is strange that Judas follows Christ for the bag, that was so poor; yet he did, until he saw, after three years and a half waiting, so little came in. So it is strange that men should seek to join poor churches for that; yet they do and will, so long as they have any lots to give, or purses to lend, or hearts to take care and provide for those that are joined to them. You shall have many poor Christian men; but be kind and bountiful to them, you may lead them into any errors, catch them at your pleasure with a silver hook, until they see their gain grows little, and respect less, and then they fall off.

3. Their comfort for union to the church of God, 1. Covers their sin and hides it from the eyes of the world. Thieves walk without suspicion in true men's companies, and thus they make the "house of prayer a den of thieves;" and this is some comfort. For hypocrites, they can carry it cleverly that none see; though God see, it is no matter. It will not be thought that a member of a church dares do such a wickedness, yet so it is sometimes. 2. Comforts their conscience in their sin; men love their lusts; but what, no respect to ordinances of Christ? yes, and so conscience is quiet, and sin lives too. Jer. vii. 3. Because there is much comfort in God's ordinances, and in attending on God there, not only verbal, but the visible gospel is sweet, the sacraments; hence they join themselves as in John's ministry, "You rejoiced for a season," not only in Christ, but in communion of saints, especially in dangerous times, that a man fears the judgments of God will come in those places wherever they live without them. And now they are quiet when got into the cities of the Levites, from the pursuer of blood.

Reason 4. In regard of the saints themselves.

First. There is seen many times a divine majesty and excellency in them, which has a drawing virtue with it, that many, out of respect to that, close with them, as Gen. xxvi. 27, 28. God makes Balaam to see Israel's glory in his tents, and he can not curse, (if he might have all the world,) but must bless them.

Secondly. There is much charity which thinks no evil, that where they see evils, they cover them, where there is but little good appearing, they hope there is more than they see; the "king's daughter" being "all glorious within."

Thirdly. There is a spirit of humility in them, to think that others appear far better than themselves, until God discovers them, especially in that they are yet unsettled.

Fourthly. A spirit of desire to have all as near the Lord as they can, and though there be evils in them, yet they hope that will make them better.

Reason 5. From the Lord himself; who has, —

First. Reserved this exact separation as one part of his own glory at his second coming. Then he shall separate sheep and goats.

Secondly. Because some are very serviceable to his church, and so to Christ, as *caput politicum*, both in regard of outward means of subsistence, and also with edifying gifts; hence into his family he will let them come, being servants, and like carriers that carry another's money and wealth to him, and then turns them out of doors.

Thirdly. Because of a certain real, yet not thorough work of the Lord, whereby he draws them to some fellowship with the church, the members, and some kind of fellowship with his Son; yet it not being a thorough, effectual, Almighty drawing, they prove unsound. John vi. 65.

Fourthly. That the Lord might manifest the exceeding greatness of his wrath in some; for God's last end in all the wicked is to show the greatness of it, (Rom. ix. 21, 22,) yet in some more than others; and hence raises them up in the church to great eminency of profession, and parts, and honor, that all the saints also may admire God's grace to themselves the more, that when "two in the field, one shall be taken, another left," that they should sit in the same seats, and yet some called, others left; and of them that are called to leave many, and love me, and that men of great parts, and I a poor simple one to choose such a base thing, to confound the wise, the mighty. But as it is said of Pharaoh, What meant all the miracles? all the humblings of heart? and yet he would not let them go; "For this cause have I raised thee up." Exod. ix. 16. "Of all that thou hast given me," (saith Christ,) "not one is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." So here.

Section IV.

Use 1. This serves to clear us in this country from a foul aspersion that is cast out of the mouths of pulpits upon us, that we hold the churches of Christ to have no hypocrites in them. We answer, that though if hypocrites could be openly and ecclesiastically discerned, they should not be received in, nor kept in, because matter fit to ruin a church is not fit to make a church; yet we say there will be tares and wheat, there will be chaff and corn, there will be wise and foolish virgins, there will be good and bad mingled together in the churches until the world's end.

Use 2. *Of Advice.* To the watchmen of the churches; nay,

to all that profess themselves to be their brethren's keepers, to all that are wise-hearted virgins, not to lavish your charity too far; it is a precious grace, and you have little enough for them that are sincere; but to bear a jealous heart, and to labor for a quick, discerning eye to find out them that will mingle themselves among you. This was the commendation and honor of the Ephesians. Rev. ii. 2. I confess it is a sinful extreme to cry down all the virgins as foolish when there be "five wise." Satan will seek to break the bond of brotherly love by sowing false reports and horrible suspicions; and it is a hard thing for a Paul, after the Lord has rapt him up to the third heaven in revelations, not to be puffed up, and in seeing himself at a distance from other men, not to despise and condemn them that have not risen so high as he. A false heart, when he sees more than others, as he thinks, now thinks highly of himself, as some great reformer of churches and the world, especially if a man of shallow head; and hence censures and condemns all that do not magnify him, and reverence his judgments and the dust of his feet. And yet it is another sinful extreme to swallow down all flies that be in the cup, and to think too charitably of every one that does profess. Children that have no children themselves will make children of clouts, and then love them; and hence many a soul lies bleeding to death, because they have such tender friends as will not search them. And I doubt not but many in hell may say, O that I should live among such and such, and they never deal faithfully with me!

Object. If a man walk fairly, should I censure him?

Ans. No; but yet maintain a holy jealousy over them, as Paul did over the Galatians. This stands with love, as it was with Job, chap. i. 5. As it is with chirurgeons, it is love to cut to the quick. Love them because they appear to be Christ's, and are so to thee, and this shall have a reward; but yet be jealous in love, because there be that hid which was never yet seen.

1. It may be thou mayst save a soul, and they will love thee; or else thou shalt clear justice by being a witness against them.

2. It is the chief work for Christ here, there being no profane ones among us, to overthrow the kingdom of hypocrisy, as well as of civility and profaneness.

3. You will save the Lord a purging and cleansing time; for, when Christ purges not with the Holy Ghost in his saints and ordinances, he will with fire. Here I might give rules for discerning men's spirits; as, —

First. Mark their speech; for "by thy words thou shalt be justified;" and many times one word will give a light to see all, as in Simon Magus; as with men in a labyrinth found out by one thread.

Secondly. Mark them that you see not grappling with sin and temptation; for if we see them without that they are not yet tried, therefore observe them here; here is their trial when time of temptation comes.

Thirdly. Get thyself to stand at a distance from sinful men, from all the world. "We know we are of God." 1 John v. 19. As men that are in the water look only to themselves, but standing safe on shore, they see others drowning. I speak this because I fear the churches are so busy about their own things, that their watch is not kept; if they see no gross sin, then all is well.

Use 3. Hence be not offended if you see great cedars fall, stars fall from heaven, great professors die and decay. 1. Do not think they be all such. 2. Do not think the elect shall fall. Truly some are such, that when they fall, one would think a man truly sanctified might fall away, as the Arminians think. 1 John ii. 19, "They were not of us." I speak this because the Lord is shaking, and I look for great apostasies towards; for God is trying all his friends through all the Christian world. In Germany, what profession was there! Who would have thought of it? The Lord, who delights to manifest that openly which was hid secretly, sends a sword, and they fall; others in other places receive the word with joy, the Lord sends persecution, and fearing men more than the filth of sin and anger of Christ, they fall. Others stand it out there, and suffer, and venture hither, and, Issachar-like, see rest is good, and crouch under their burdens, and so they fall. Others have had sweetness in ordinances; the Lord departs, and so they fall. Others have corrupt hearts, and received the truth in the form, not in love, and stood in defence of the truth, not in love of the truth; the Lord lets error loose, and they fall. Well, never be offended at this; I am not, because I never knew man fall but he loved some lust, and was never broken from sin; and although this is not seen when they do fall, it offends not me.

Use 4. O, therefore, search your own hearts. When Christ said to the disciples, "One shall betray me," "Lord, is it I?" say they; so, when not one, but many, Lord, is it I? O, many a Christian lies fast asleep, never comes to a thorough search, a strict watch. Do but consider this; 1. That in churches, nay, purest churches, many may lie hid, not discerned. 2. Thou

mayst be one. 3. If thou beest, that of all men living none shall so deeply sink in hell. 4. That all ordinances shall tend to this end, and all thy joys, all thy afflictions; and therefore, O, search, before the Lord search, and say, Lord, as no man's punishments and plagues can be like mine, nor sins, if I perish, so if pardoned, loved, never any shall have such cause to bless thee. And, therefore, take not up with weak and groundless hopes, but love that hand that smites and wounds thee; for this discovery is to awaken thee. But you have so much business you will not, can not, etc. Consider what a fearful thing it is to be hung up as for a gazing-stock to saints, so an everlasting terror to the damned themselves.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTAINING A DISCOVERY OF GOSPEL HYPOCRITES.

SECTION I.

Observ. 2. That the most hidden hypocrites of the purest churches under the gospel are evangelical, or gospel hypocrites.

For these that were foolish were not such as in appearance rested in the law, or in a covenant of works, but they had escaped those entanglements, and now were virgins that plead their interest in, and their communion, and fellowship, and love-knot with Christ; they had now their lamps ready, and made much preparation for him, and they did wait for him, and verily looked to have eternal fellowship with him their beloved, insomuch that they took their flight so high towards heaven and Christ, that they passed for a time the discerning of the wise; for you must know, that where the gospel comes, there are two sorts of enemies against it.

1. Open; and those are your justiciaries, that, seeking to establish their own righteousness, and being puffed up with it, can. with pretended good consciences in doing God service, oppose the righteousness of God.

2. Secret and subtle enemies, yet seeming friends; and these are your carnal gospelers, that cry down all their own righteousness, and cry up Christ, and see nothing in themselves, as there is good cause so to think, and look for all from Christ; and yet these, when the Lord comes to search, are found false; and these are the worms that grow in this wood, in this building, in these churches. Thus it was in Christ's time, the church of the Jews

had left their gross idolatries; yet this was their stumbling-stone, they sought to establish their own righteousness, and hence he came to his own, and his own received him not, and hence were cut off for this their unbelief; but others (divers sorts of them) did receive him, believed in him. John ii. 23. Many took hold on Christ, and he took no hold on them, wondered at him, and entertained him when others did reject him, as Capernaum did, yet under his woe. And these are the spots of evangelical purity, wens in the bodies of the best constituted churches. Look but upon Christ's own family. John vi. 69, 70. The disciples professed when others departed, "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast words of life;" yet saith he, "I have chosen you indeed to be for me, but one is a devil;" viz., Judas the deacon stood not on his own righteousness, but was for Christ, and followed him; and yet in this evangelical angel without is a devil within, because he still harbored his lusts within. This the apostle Paul foresaw. Acts xx. 29, 30. Some wolves without should come, and also some cankers within should fret, that should draw many disciples after them, (in a church bought by Christ's own blood,) "speaking perverse things," pretending to draw disciples after Christ, but it is indeed after themselves; and Paul laments this — "Many walk," i. e., profess Christ and his cross, "yet enemies to it." Phil. iii. 19. This Christ foretells. Luke xiii. 25, 26. Many seek, many knock, and at last cry, "Lord, Lord, open," and in their lifetime they pleaded communion with Christ; yet, "Depart, ye workers of iniquity." Jude 4, certain men are crept in, turning grace into lasciviousness; for this is the very form of an evangelical hypocrite — in denying his own righteousness, to establish his sin, it is advancing Christ to advance his lust. The epistles of James and John are antidotes against this kind of poison, and I look on them as lamps hung up to discover these men, not but that these men are indeed under a covenant of works; for there be but two sorts of men, and two ends of all men, hence but two covenants; hence those that are not indeed under grace are under the law, and under the curse; but because the most subtle hypocrites appear or seem to be under grace, and their external operations are chiefly evangelical, hence I call them evangelical hypocrites.

Section II.

Reason 1. In regard of the power of the word and gospel of life and spirit in such churches; for the gospel where it comes, as it advanceth the glorious and everlasting righteousness of

Christ, so it knocks under foot all man's, as a means subservient to that end, and it coming with power and light, it would be too gross for hypocrites to maintain life by works; hence Christ is that which they look unto; for Christ when he preached, not only many "believed because of his miracles," but "when they heard his word," (John viii. 30; Matt. xiii.,) in the parable of the sower, the word came with much power, that they received it with joy, and did believe, but fell by their lusts. And look as it is with the sun, there comes light and heat with it, so there comes, —

1. Truth to the mind, and conquers the judgments of hypocrites, that there is no life, good, righteousness, but in Christ, nor salvation but by Christ.

2. There comes some goodness of the gospel to the heart, that men hearing and seeing salvation wrapped up there, O, that is sweet and good! and hence their affections and hearts are in some measure conquered by the power of the over-dazzling truth; and hence hypocrites, being thus conquered, partly being of this opinion, partly tasting some good of it, desire it out of self-love, expect it out of self-delusion, and profess themselves virgins out of these principles.

Reason 2. In regard of the power of evangelical examples in the five wise virgins; for look as it is with living men when the sun shines upon their heads, they cast their shadows that follow them; so when the Lord Jesus shines upon the souls of his own people, almost every honest, sincere-hearted man will cast his shadow that will be like him; hence hypocrites in those churches which are commonly rather led by example than by rule, will be very like them, and imitate them; if they should not, what communion could they have with them, or what love could they receive from them? For there is a mighty power in eminent examples to overbear hypocrites, that if they will turn themselves into any form, they must into theirs, as in Joash; for there are two things in the carriage of the saints.

1. There is a condemning power in it; hence men fear to live unlike them.

2. There is a winning virtue in it, an attractive virtue; hence men endeavor to be and live like them, to be of the same mind, the same heart with them; and hence others take them, and they take themselves, to be sincere, and hence they are evangelical gospel hypocrites that lie hid in these churches; hence, (Zech. viii. 23,) "Many shall take hold of a Jew's skirt, (I doubt not but some false ones,) We have heard God is with you."

And as Christ when lifted up and risen, so saints draw hypocrites to them.

Reason 3. Because the gospel brings the greatest and sweetest consolations with it. Hence a man, under the terror of the law and sense of curse for his sin, will make his last refuge hither, and hide himself under the wing of the gospel, not so much out of love to Christ or gospel, but because they serve his turn, and give him ease. Like men scorched with heat, and almost ready to die, the shadow of a tree is now very comfortable, and therefore there they sit; so these. Or, as men with scalded arms, they put them into water, which gives them ease, no cure; but because it gives them ease, there they keep them; so here. Men have been scalded with wrath; O, now gospel is very sweet, and so are eased by it, never cured by it. Therefore, here you shall find them disclaim all works, and cry up grace only; where the purest churches are, there are usually great awakenings, there God is very near men, and made most manifest to men's consciences, and there are most foul plagues, contempt of the Spirit of grace, and hence most dreadful torments of conscience, and fearful lookings for of judgment. Now, hence it comes to pass, when Christ is offered, and general notice given to men's minds, that yet there is hope and mercy for great sinners; this fills them with joy and peace, as John's hearers, (John v. 35,) and hence they believe as the stony ground that had some ploughing, and hence received the word with joy, and believed. Ps. lxvi. 3. It is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ, Antichrist tormented the consciences of men. Rev. ix. Men have no peace within nor without. Luther is raised up, and preacheth the doctrine of free grace, which a world of men looking to their ease reject; others in truth receive it; for some time before his death he cries to God that he may not live to see the ruins that were coming on Germany for their contempt. The law is the ministry of death; the gospel propounds great privileges, with much more sweetness to sinners, and hence hither men fly.

Reason 4. Because the gospel yields the fairest colors for a man's sloth, and strongest props for that. Hence you shall see them walking in this garden; for the last sin God conquers in a man is his sloth. When the swine have no swill to eat, yet you shall find them in the mire of sloth; this "slays the foolish." Hence the best hypocrite will plead the gospel, it is troublesome to the flesh to bear a daily sense of the sins and wants of the soul. Hence you shall, Capernaum, receive Christ, and wonder at his doctrine; and yet Christ upbraids them, "they repented not."

Matt. xi. 20. It is troublesome, nay, impossible, for a man to break his chains and get his soul loosed from his lusts, and free for the Lord. The gospel shows all fullness in Christ, and that he must do all; a slothful, false heart, therefore, closeth with Christ as the end, but neglects him in the means. Why? Christ must do all, say they, and hence, if Christ do drop upon their hearts, well and good; if not, it is Christ's fault; he is a hard master that gathers where he did not sow, and hence wrapped it up. A man's false heart is weary of the yoke of Christ, and hence would fain be eased of it. Now, the gospel promiseth liberty from the bondage and curse of the law, and a slothful heart can find out reasons to free himself from the rule of it, as part of Christian liberty, "this is our liberty in Christ Jesus." 2 Pet. ii. 19. And they rejoice exceedingly that the law is dead, as they did (Rev. xi. 10) for the death of witnesses, because they tormented them. I say again, they rejoice not because the Lord makes them like himself, and because of his image restored by the gospel, and because they feel the power of it, but because they are free from the power of it. It is an old deceit, yet subtle to rejoice, and love, and bless Christ, because he will pardon sin, though I lie and live in them. Or, if they do not free themselves from it, the gospel shows the law within closing with the law without, to be an evidence the Lord will not impute it, and that it is not they, but sin in them. Hence a slothful heart will continue in his sloth, and to ease himself of trouble, for sin and obedience too, say, it is not he, but sin. And hence Arminius makes a strange interpretation of Rom. vii. Because he saw German professors plead that for themselves, the Israelites entered not into Canaan, unbelief caused it. And why did that shut them out? O, there were walled towns and difficulties, and this was the last shock, and hence they fell off; so it is in hypocrites now. The safest place to lie asleep is in Christ's lap.

Reason 5. From the mighty cunning of Satan, the strength of whose kingdom is made and continued by peace. Luke xi. 41. Hence, "He will turn himself into an angel of light," and suffer men to go to Christ and the gospel, to avoid the search, that they may be Christ's in appearance, and his indeed. 2 Cor. iv. 4. He has a mighty power over men to blind them; for there be three things which trouble men usually, and make them question their estates, and the gospel quiets and absolves them from all.

1. Conscience, that cries dolefully sometimes, These sins shall have these woes. Yes, unless I believe; but I believe, and trust to Christ, and flee to God's mercy.

2. Ministry, that cries and searcheth into the deepest windings

of men's hearts, that men can not but see that Christ has eyes of flaming fire to see through them. Now, hence men avoid the stroke and power of all ministry; thus it is with me, thus it will be with me; but I believe and trust to Christ. And hence men bear back like brazen walls all blows.

3. God's judgment seat. What though men see you not, yet God seeth. Why, they have sinned, they confess, but Christ has suffered; they have sinned, but they trust, etc., (Micah iii. 11,) "Is not the Lord among us?" Look as it was with Joab, "he runs to the horns of the altar," yet there he perisheth, there he would die, there was the last refuge from search and death; so here.

Section III.

Use 1. Hence do not think your estates good, because you look only for justification by Christ, and look only to God's free grace, and count of grace in Christ. It is a common error for men to think, being they be of this opinion, only to look for grace in Christ; to think that, therefore, their estates are false, and they are justified by Christ. Why, there may be such a power of word and spirit to conquer their judgments, as those Papists that have been pleading against it have been overcome by it. Thou mayst receive the notions of it in thy head, but the power of it never into thy heart.

Object. 1. But my heart has been affected with this to see when my sins deserve death; yet there is mercy for the vilest in Christ.

Ans. Thou mayst taste and joy, and yet fall off at last.

Object. 2. But I have fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

Ans. Thou mayst eat and drink in his presence, and yet be bid, "Depart; I know you not, a worker of iniquity."

Object. 3. But I have "escaped the pollution of the world," (2 Pet. x. 20,) and that through this knowledge of Christ, his love has much moved me to part with my sins.

Ans. It may be so, and it may wash thee from all external pollutions, and yet thy swinish nature remain still hidden from thee, but seen of an all-seeing God.

Object. 4. But I look for Christ, and wait for him, and desire him, and all that are wise think well of me.

Ans. You may do all this, and yet you may be found foolish, for all this. Evangelical work, which is accompanied with salvation in some, it may be hypocritical in thee; and therefore take heed you do not take shows for substance. For, look, as in the gospel God's utmost perfection of wisdom and love appears, so

the most hidden and admirable delusions of Satan are evangelical. There his power is employed to undermine, and so to keep his head. O that we could but imagine and set before our eyes the amazing condition of such a man, whose plagues shall be made wonderful, that has been troubled with sin a long time, at last looks to Christ, and there rests, and so hears all sermons, and there still sleeps, and considers often that his ways are evil, but never suspects his faith to be evil; then he comes to die, and then looks for Christ; at last the wick or snuff dies, and sun sets, and darkness approaches, and then suddenly slips into hell, where he sees Christ and saints afar off. And what has deceived them? O, their faith has deceived them, to see Christ shaking them off as dust. O, they wish, O that I had known or feared this before! And will you not fear now? As for you, profane ones, that can scoff, and drink, and break Sabbaths, and live idly, your judgment is writ upon your foreheads; but, O, take heed, you that have escaped these pollutions, lest you deceive yourselves here. To show you that deceit particularly, it is not my time yet, but go along, and think sadly of it; I may look for justification by Christ, and wait for Christ, and yet perish. O, let me be sure I get such a faith as will not deceive me here. Should not a man, you will say, trust Christ? Yes, when you can in truth; but thy trust may be but presumption.

Use 2. Take not up, therefore, every opinion and doctrine, from men or angel, that bears a fair show of advancing Christ; for they may be but the fruits of evangelical hypocrisy and deceit, that, being deceived themselves, may deceive others too. Matt. vii. 15, "Beware of them that come in sheep's clothing," in the innocency, purity, and meekness of Christ and his people, "but inwardly are wolves, proud, cruel, censorious, speaking evil of what they know not; by their fruits you shall know them." Do not think, beloved, that Satan will not seek to send delusions among us; and do you think these delusions will come out of the Popish pack, whose inventions smell above ground here? No; he must come, and will come, with more evangelical fine-spun devices. It is a rule observed among Jesuits at this day, if they would conquer religion by subtlety, never oppose religion with a cross religion, but set it against itself; so oppose the gospel by the gospel; and look, as churches pleading for works had new invented devised works, so when faith is preached, men will have their new inventions of faith. I speak not this against the doctrine of faith where it is preached, but am glad of it; nor that I would have men content themselves with every form of faith; for I believe that most men's faith needs confirming or

trying, but I speak to prevent danger on that hand. For it was that which Christ did foretell, (Matt. xxiv. 24,) "Many false Christs should arise," i. e., such as should misapply Christ, that had a spirit for Christ, which was a spirit against Christ, and would "deceive, if it were possible, the very elect;" for coming with Christ's Spirit, they dare not oppose them, lest they oppose the Spirit of Christ. The only remedy is to hold to Christ's word, and not to depart one hair's breadth from it, (Rev. iii. 10,) and to a word well understood, and then dispute no more. Satan comes to Eve, and bids her eat; no, God forbid; yet eat to be like gods; he dazzled her with that which was not; now she fell. Take the truth from what the word saith, and depart not from it.

Use 3. Here see the dreadful estate of all them that be found false-hearted in the purest churches, and that in these three respects: —

First. That they should so horribly forsake and blaspheme the name of God, to make the glorious gospel of God and all the sweet doctrines of grace a cover for their hypocrisy and sin, as indeed it is; for were it not for this, they might be found out in their sins, but now they are beyond the discovery of all men or means.

Secondly. That they should be so lamentably forsaken of God, as to be left, —

1. To the most subtle and spiritual hypocrisy in the world, which, being most cross to God, shall receive most fierce and searching wrath; for, as divines say of Christ, he was forsaken in soul, because man had sinned with his soul; so God's wrath will search deep in their hearts, whose hearts have guilefully departed from the Lord.

2. That he should lead them so far, and yet in the main forsake them, O, this is heavy wrath, for a man to be led in the daylight of the gospel, almost to the end of his journey, and at last the sun sets, and he left to wilder.

Thirdly. In regard of the cries of the very gospel itself against them. O that the precious gospel of God, coming with so much peace, love, grace, mercy, should win them to be hypocrites, but never to be friends! Beloved, as there is vengeance of the law, and of the temple, so there is vengeance of the gospel when the soul shall be drawn before the tribunal of Christ, and shall stand there quaking, all sins set in order before you, and your mouth shall be stopped. What say you then for your life? O, grace and mercy, Lord; O, now shall the gospel come forth and say, All this I did, I spake, I strove, I comforted, I

terrified, and yet he hath opposed the Lord, and me he hath made a cover for all these evils; and therefore, Lord, let him never be comforted more. John iii. 19. O, Christ hath heavy things against these times, that take light of the gospel to see to commit their sin by. And, therefore, lament your present estates, you that know yourselves nought, never yet drawn to Christ, never yet humbled at the feet of Christ, and look up to the Lord, whatever misery he inflicts, not to suffer thee to be deceived here; not only to have such a faith as may catch hold on Christ, but he on thee, and come unto the light to manifest the hidden enmity there. Never was yet man deceived but he that was willing to be deceived, that would not use the means, and search.

Section IV.

Use 4. All you, therefore, that live under the light of the gospel, consider if it doth not nearly concern you to search and try yourselves, whether you, or some of you, may not be evangelical hypocrites. The time is coming that you shall stand before the tribunal of God, wherein the hidden things of darkness shall be brought forth to light, and it will be too late to know yourselves then. O, therefore, search now. No man's misery will be so great as this, if your heart be found false. I shall speak in a manner but generally now.

Sign 1. Those that do believe and yet fail in respect of the efficient cause of faith, it never had the right maker, never came out of the right shop nor mint; it was never a faith of God's making, but a faith of your own making; so that it is a base, bastard faith, that though it be born in the house, it shall never possess the inheritance, because it was never begotten of the right father; the Lord never wrought it, but themselves; for many a man is convinced, by the law and spirit of bondage, that he must die, and that he is a most grievous sinner, and that, when he has done all, he is unprofitable; but yet he trusts to Christ's and God's mercy, and so believes; he finds no great difficulty in this, nor no great need of the almighty power of the Lord to work this, and all men living shall never make him think but that he does heartily and truly believe; but ask him, Have you no doubt of your estate, and of Christ's not taking hold of you when you take hold of him? Yes, but seeing he has been troubled about his estate, and repented of his sin, (in his fashion,) and reformed himself and family, and loves the best things, he believes without question, and so misapplies promises to himself, never feeling a need of the revelation and

donation of Jesus to him by the Father; and thus the Lord finds this man a Christ, and this man finds the Lord a faith, and the Lord Jesus redeems this man by price, and this man redeems himself by power, and so the Father shall have some glory for providing a Saviour; Christ shall have some glory for paying a price, and the Spirit of Christ, which only can draw to Christ, shall lose his glory; and so this man may take it to himself. And is this good, think you? Col. ii. 12, "Risen with Christ through faith of the operation of God." 1 Pet. i. 3, "The same power that raised Christ from the dead must raise you to a lively hope." Matt. xxii. 1–3, "One man came from his hedges and highways to the feast of the promise and ordinances of the gospel, till the Lord saw him without Christ." But, John vi. 64, 65, "Unless the Father reveals Christ's face," the Father persuades thee of Christ's love, "you can never come to Christ;" men know not thy hypocrisy, thou dost not, but Jesus doth, and what good will thy faith do thee then? It was a sweet speech of Christ, "Thy faith has saved thee." O, heavy when it shall be said, Thy faith has damned thee; that which I thought to be the way of life is the way of death: truly, so it will if you do not fetch it out of heaven.

Sign 2. Those that do believe, but they fail in the object, i. e., they close with Christ, but they know not who he is; that as the woman of Samaria, that had some lookings to the Messiah, she did worship whom she knew not; so men believe in one whom they know not, only have heard the fame of. For there are two things in the gospel — 1. The outward words and letters; 2. The things contained in those words. Hence there is a double knowledge of Christ.

1. A fantasy knowledge, as a man, that hears of any thing absent, presently fancies the thing in his head.

2. There is an intuitive knowledge, whereby the soul doth not only see words and fancies, but beholds the things themselves. Hence it comes to pass that many a man, hearing the same, and receiving the fancy of Christ, believes in him, but not seeing him as he is, therein he believes in one whom he knows not; and hence the Lord Jesus may be a hid thing to many a man, and the gospel a sealed book, though he lives and remains in the very light of the sun, and that all his days. Hence Christ laments Jerusalem — "O that thou hadst known, but now hid, hid;" and yet Christ preached. Yes, (Deut. xxix. 4,) "You have heard and seen, and yet the Lord has not given a heart to see to this day:" so it is with many a soul; you have heard with your ears the great things of the kingdom of God,

yet the Lord has not given you eyes to see; you have seen deliverances on sea, yet the Lord has not given you hearts to understand; and if so, all your faith is nought, and profession and affection vile, and estates miserable. 2 Cor. iii. 18, "All we with open face," etc.

Object. But many see it not so.

Ans. I confess some may see more darkly, and be mourning under it; yet he that doth not in part, he to whom it is hid, (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4,) is one of them that be lost, whose "eyes Satan has blinded." John vi. 45, "He that has heard and learned of the Father." Many hear, but never learn of the Father, hence never come truly unto Christ: it is in this case as it is with a traitor; he comes to the king for his life, and prays for his son's sake; the king sends for him, and saith, Here is one that begs for your sake; do you know him? For my sake! I wonder on what acquaintance; he is a stranger to me, and therefore I regard him not. So here.

Sign 3. Those that have some kind of sight of the object, and see Christ, but there is a wound in the subject, because their faith arises and springs out of an ill soil, it is in such a party that never was yet thoroughly rent from his sin, and here is the great wound of the most cunning hypocrites living; for there are two things in him—

1. A carnal heart, which can not be satisfied with a spiritual good with Christ; hence he must have his lust.

2. A convinced conscience, which can not be quieted without Christ and mercy; hence men close with Christ, and their lusts too. Look as it was with the stony ground and thorny soil, they believed, but had a stone at bottom; "but roots of bitterness," etc. These men can sometimes plead acquaintance with Christ, (Luke xiii. 26, 27,) yet "workers of iniquity." 2 Pet. ii. 19, 20. Some had escaped the pollution of the world, (that you may do,) but a swinish nature lasts, that they never felt, or grew not in the feeling of it, and loosening from it; as with apricot trees rooted in the earth, but leaning on the wall, so they on Christ. O, consider of this: let a man be cast down as low as hell by sorrow, and lie under your chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come; let a man then be raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; let a man reform and shine like an earthly angel, yet if not rent from lust, that either you did never see it, or if so, you have not followed the Lord to remove it, but proud, dogged, worldly, sluggish still, false in your dealings, cunning in your tradings, devils in your families, images in your churches; you are objects of pity now, and shall be of terror at

the great day; for where sin remains in power, it will bring faith, and Christ, and joy into bondage and service of itself.

Sign 4. Those that believe, yet fail of saving faith in regard of the very act of believing and closing with Christ, viz., they close with Christ, but it is without a high esteem of him or love to him; they have some, but right grace consists in a kind of summity or excellency, else it is not right. 1 Pet. ii. 5. To you that believe he is precious, and hence it comes to pass, —

1. That some never come to find or enjoy Christ, because they will not come off to the price of him, to sell themselves out of all for him.

2. Some sell him away again in time of temptation, like Esau that sold his birthright, and never make any thing of it; because the bond is not strong enough, down they fall from him.

3. Hence comes all a man's uneven carriage.

4. Hence comes sometimes the unpardonable sin. Heb. x. 29. Many a man lays claim to Christ, and his blood, and righteousness, that never knew the worth of it; and this is Christ's complaint, methinks, in heaven, (and of saints on earth,) "He comes unto his own, and his own esteem him not;" his own love him not, his own receive him not; him that is the glory of heaven, the beauty of the Father, the delight of saints, the wonderment of angels; he, I say, is not esteemed by many a man that in his judgment esteems him, and in his heart does despise him. There are two parts of this esteem. 1. To esteem him only. John v. 44. 2. Him ever and alway; (Ps. lxxiii. 26,) "Thou art my portion forever." Many say they esteem Christ, but to be ever loving him, ever looking on him, this is not their frame. O, think of this; fail here of your valuing of him, and you fail every where.

Sign 5. Those that believe, but they fail in their end; and these may, for a while, in a hot fit, prize water, prize Christ and mercy above all things in the world, but their end is naught; so that men here may ask, and never have, because of their lusts. As a man that lies on his death bed, or in a sea storm in fear of hell, he may now prize and take hold on Christ to save him. A man lies upon the bed of horror of heart, he may prize Christ to comfort him, and getting a conceit of it, be rapt up almost in an ecstasy of joy, that a man would think he was sealed with the Spirit of Christ, and yet his end being naught, Christ only to comfort him, misseth of Christ in conclusion; for when a man believes indeed, he receives Christ for the end the Father sent him, viz., to be King and Sovereign of the whole man, as well as Saviour; (Ps. xxiv. 7.) "Open your gates, that

the King of glory," etc.; (Rom. viii. 38,) "I am persuaded nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord;" our Lord as well as Jesus. Indeed, (John vi. 15,) some did receive Christ to be King, but it was that he might be their cook; he provided loaves for them; so here. Ps. lxvi. 2, 3, "Because of thy power, thine enemies shall flatteringly submit." It is but flattery, not faith; look to it, therefore.

Sign 6. Those that believe, but fail in regard of the use of the gospel and of the Lord Jesus; and these we read of, (Jude 3,) viz., of some men that did turn "grace into wantonness;" for therein appears the exceeding evil of a man's heart, that not only the law, but also the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus works in him all manner of unrighteousness; and it is too common for men at the first work of conversion, O, then to cry for grace and Christ, and afterward grow licentious, live and lie in the breach of the law, and take their warrant for their course from the gospel. I shall not name all the ways that men do so, but I will only speak that which conscience and compassion move me to; not to begin, but, if possible, to still division; and what I shall speak shall be by way of prevention.

1. Take heed of making graces in a Christian the weaknesses of a Christian; for this is to make darkness light and grace wantonness indeed; is it not? Take heed, then, of thinking or saying counterfeit or false sanctification consists in feeling something in a man's self, as love to delight in the Lord and his ways. True sanctification in seeing nothing, no love, no delight. Why, the apostle Paul knew "that in him (i. e., in his flesh) dwelt no good thing;" but he calls it flesh there, and groans under it, yet he felt a law within closing with the law without, and blessed the Lord for it, and that was himself. Do you think the Holy Ghost comes on a man as on Balaam, by immediate acting, and then leaves him, and then he has nothing? Yes, beloved, know you not Christ is in you (2 Cor. xiii. 5) as well as out of you; in you, comforting, dwelling, sanctifying, preparing the heart for himself? Indeed, to be puffed up with grace, or rest in it, is a sin; yet that grace is not that sin.

2. Take heed of making weaknesses graces or duties; as,—

First. To make poverty of spirit the sight of nothing in a man's self. Why, he that is poor has heaven for his, and so Christ and promises, and has faith his, at least some seeds. Now, to see nothing now is to see an untruth, and to tell a flat lie to God, and men, and Scripture, too. Indeed, a man that is poor doth usually see nothing; but that is his weakness, not any grace.

Secondly. To say there is no difference between graces of hypocrites and saints. Why so? Because I can not see any. Is this your weakness or your wisdom, you can see none? And will you make your weakness your religion?

Thirdly. That a man must not evidence his justification by his sanctification; I speak of that which accompanies salvation. Why so? Because then there will be comfort to-day and sorrow to-morrow. Grant it; but then consider, 1. That is either a man's weakness and ignorance that he doth not see it; or, 2. His wickedness and carelessness that has stained that work. And will you make this a duty, a grace? O, but many have been deceived here. Grant it; and will you make your wretched baseness of heart the foundation of this conceit?

Fourthly. That a man must see no saving work nor take comfort from any promise until he is sealed. No. Why so? Because many tall Christians have deceived themselves so, and deluded themselves there, and been kept off from Christ, and truly I believe it in part. But what of that? Shall men's weakness be my religion or work? No, beloved; for a man believes before he is sealed. Eph. i. 15. And hence Christ is his; and now for him to deny Christ to be his own is to make Christ a liar, (1 John v. 10, 12, 13;) not that I would have Christians content themselves here (it is a sign you never knew what Christ meant if you do so) till he shall send a more full gale of his Spirit.

3. If you do account them weaknesses, yet take heed your closing with Christ do not cause you to make a light matter of sin; either not to take notice of sins at all, only look to Christ, (it is not I, but sin, as being the act of the outward man; one calls this to unknow a man's self,) or not to be deeply sensible of them, and so use Christ as your shoe-clout to wipe them off. O, this is dangerous! The spirit of joy never quenched the spirit of sorrow. Capernaum entertained Christ, and yet perished. O, she repented not. What, must we repent after we be in Christ? Yes, (Jer. xxx. 19,) "After I was turned I repented." It argues a bold conscience, when men, as they look to no good themselves, so to no sin in themselves, but wholly to Christ.

4. Take heed of those doctrines which in show lift up grace, but indeed pull it down, or any part of it; as, —

First. To think that the letter of the whole Scripture holds out no more than a covenant of works, a most prodigious speech, though colored with advancing a spiritual covenant of grace, and no word but Christ.

Secondly. Under a show of advancing God's grace in doing all, to say the ordinances are not means, but only occasions of conversion.

Thirdly. Under a show of giving all to grace, to abolish that plain truth, as to say we are not justified by faith, which, though it be true, not really; i. e., not simply by faith in itself, considered as a work, yet to say, [not relatively, as the Lord is apprehended by it,] it is false. If we cast off the power of the truth, yet let us not cast off the form of it; keep the form of wholesome words as well as truths.

Fourthly. Take heed of maintaining that a man until sealed is not persuaded to believe, under a show of letting the Spirit of grace do all. And, brethren, doth not the Spirit of grace accompany the word of grace? Are not evangelical commands part of that word? Is there not a power going along with them? What is this but to take from God's book? And he that so doth, God will blot him out of the book of life. Rev. xxii. 19.

Fifthly. That a Christian is to gather no assurance from particular conditional promises, under color of receiving all from Christ and grace. True, them that have nothing to do with them ought not; but for those that have to do with them as their inheritance not to apply and make use of them for their comfort, it is to trample under foot Christ's blood, that has purchased them for that end, and it is to raze out in our practice the greatest part almost of the covenant of grace.

Sixthly. That the law ought not to be our rule of life, under a show of being freed from it by Christ, as though Christ came to set hell gates open for men to do what they please. Shall I say any more? I am weary with speaking; I desire rather to go aside and mourn, and to think there is somewhat amiss why the Lord lets these out. You that are sincere, search and keep close with Christ, and fetch more life from him, and though accounted under a covenant of works with men, yet rejoice; you know it is better with you in his sight. And you that are weak, beware and take heed and do not consider what I, but the Holy Ghost, has cleared this day; and as for all them that do turn grace into lasciviousness, not intentionally, but practically; not in all things, but some things; consider this scripture, (Jude 4.) men "ordained to this condemnation." They thrive and have no hurt, and they joy. O, but they have condemnation enough upon them. Do but consider, (verse 12, 13.) "twice dead;" dead in Adam, then quickened by Christ with common gifts and graces, then die and turn grace into wantonness, for

whom is reserved the very blackness of darkness forever. They bring in painted profaneness.

Use 3. O, take heed, then, lest you fall short of Christ by unbelief. Heb. iv. 1. Christ must do all. O, but take heed, use means, and then put the work into his hands to make faith right. Heb. xii. 1, 2, "Looking to Jesus the author and finisher." Suppose Christ was here on earth, and thou shouldst beg it, would he deny thee? O, no; beg hard, therefore, now.

CHAPTER XV.

SHOWING THAT THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWIXT A SINCERE CHRISTIAN AND THE CLOSEST HYPOCRITE.

SECTION I.

Doct. 3. That there is a vast and great internal difference between those that are sincere indeed and the closest hypocrites; or there are certain qualifications within, and operations of God upon the souls of the faithful, which make a very great difference between them and the closest hypocrites.

For the Lord Jesus here sees the difference, and shows the difference, though but generally, I confess, in this verse: "Some were wise, others were foolish." Wisdom and folly are different qualities, and though these keep their residence chiefly in the mind, yet the Lord never did infuse any true wisdom into the mind but there was a great change of the heart, nor never was any man left unto his own folly but it did not only argue an evil heart, but did ever arise from thence. Eph. iv. 18. So that Christ not only sees, but discovers to the churches, a vast difference for them to take notice of. I confess the difference was not only in regard of open profaneness, or common conversation in living like men of the world, yet a difference here there is. For the opening of this point, I shall open these particulars: —

1. That the Lord does make this inward difference.
2. That it is so great that the faithful do see it.
3. That it is so great that others can not receive it when it is offered.
4. That it is so great that they can not understand it.
5. The reasons why the Lord makes this internal difference.

1. That the Lord does make it. Only some scriptures now, (Eph. v. 8,) "You were darkness, now are light;" (Eph. ii. 1,) "You were dead, now are alive." It is true, there is a life

hypocrites have which puts much difference between them and others; but if that does, what does the life of Christ in a man arising from the death of every sin? Acts xxvi. 18. The Lord turns not only from "darkness to light, but from the power of Satan to God," together with which arises remission of sins. What is this, then, but a greater change than from hell to heaven? Is it not worse than hell to be under his, not only temptations, but power? And is it not better to be with God and be in heaven?

2. It is so great that the faithful do see it. I confess at first work it is like a confused chaos; they know not what to make of it, but afterwards they can and do. 1 John v. 18, 19. We know we are "born of God, free from the dominion of sin," of which he speaks, and that the whole world lies in wickedness. Before a man is born again, he sees no difference between him and other men; but now he doth; and hence it is frequent in Scripture for saints to express their experience of their double estate, (Tit. iii. 2, 3;) and they are commanded to try themselves, and may not only see Christ out of them, but Christ in them, except they be reprobates, (2 Cor. xiii. 5;) and hence command to give thanks for this, (Col. i. 12, 13,) which commands, being evangelical, have a power to all the elect.

3. It is so great that others can not receive it when it is offered; they are so far from having it in them, or counterfeiting, or making this inward work, that they can not receive it, no, not when the Spirit itself comes to work it; (John xiv. 17,) "The Spirit of truth, which the world can not receive." It doth receive prophetical gifts and common graces; but there is a higher and more divine work which they can not receive; (Rom. viii. 7,) "It is not subject, nor can be subject, to the law of God," where the holiness of God appears.

4. It is so great that they can not understand it what it is spiritually, only in fancy; (1 Cor. ii. 14,) "Neither can he know them." And hence men lie groping all their life for grace, and ask and have not, because they know not the thing they would have; (John iv. 10,) "If thou knewest, thou wouldst ask, and he would give." A beast can not conceive what a life a man leads.

5. Now follow the reasons why the Lord doth make this internal difference, or showing that there is difference.

Section II.

Reason 1. In regard to the infinite love of the Father, which he bears to the meanest believer above the most glorious hypo-

crite that ever lived. It is an everlasting love, and it is like that love he bears toward his own Son. John xvii. 16. Now, if the Lord's love be not common to both, neither is the work or fruits of his love common in both, but a great difference there must be; for as it is with men, so it is with the Lord. There are three expressions of love. 1. Their looks. 2. Their promises of love. 3. Their works of love. So the Lord doth, —

1. Create in his people glorious apprehensions of his blessed face appearing in the glass of the gospel. Rev. xxii. 4.

2. The Lord makes many promises of love unto his people, which go to the very heart to cheer them. Hos. ii. 14.

3. The Lord confines not his love to looks and words, though it is wonderful to have the least of them; but you may read his love in his works of love. Now, those works peculiar to them are, first and chiefly, the donation of Christ, for a man in redemption to a man in vocation; and then the peculiar fruits of this love, expressed in peculiar operations upon the soul and in the soul, which God's truth in the new covenant promises, and God's faithfulness executeth, (Jer. xxxi. 33, and xxxii. 40;) to take away the "stony heart," to write "laws in the heart," to "put fear into the heart." These are the peculiar effects of this new covenant, and they are operations in a man, which only the elect feel and wonder at grace for; (Eph. ii. 4, 5,) "According to his great love hath he quickened us together with him." There is a kind of resurrection of a man's soul when it is brought home to Christ. Look as the bodies of the saints shall be different at the last day; so when God raiseth their souls from the dead here, there is a difference now.

Reason 2. In regard of the death and blood of the Lord Jesus, which was shed not only that he might be a God unto them, but that they might be a "peculiar people" unto him, (Tit. ii. 14,) "He gave himself for his people," not only to justify his people, but also to cleanse his church. Eph. v. 26, 27. For this has been God's great plot, first, to perfect his people in their head; and then, lest there should be a golden head, and feet and hands of iron and clay, and because the church is not found lovely, therefore the Lord makes it lovely by little and little here, until it "appear without spot or wrinkle" at the last day. Do you think, brethren, that Christ's blood was shed to work no more in his people than in hypocrites? Was it only shed to take away guilt of sin from God's sight, and then let a man wallow in the sins of his own heart? It is true, there is a work of sanctification which hypocrites have, which Christ's blood purchases, for I believe all common mercy and patience comes by Christ's blood,

and so all common gifts and graces; but yet, beloved, there is a vast difference; their wills were never changed, though their minds were much enlightened; hence they sinned willfully. The Lord never was dear to them; hence secret despite grew up, that at last they committed the unpardonable sin. Hos. x. 26, 29.

Reason 3. Because those graces or qualifications, together with the operations of them which are in the faithful, are the same with Christ's; the same in kind and nature; (John i. 16,) "From his fullness we have received grace for grace." Hence we are said to "bear his image;" and because it is but little at first, hence "from glory to glory." 2 Cor. iii. 18. Now, the Lord Jesus had not only the Spirit which he had without measure, but also he had many divine qualities, habits, or graces, which it is blasphemy to think that they were hypocritical or common, which the faithful receive from his fullness, and wherein they are made, in their measure, like unto him. So the saints have not only the Spirit, but also those peculiar operations of it wrought in them by the Spirit, whereby they come to be made like unto the Lord Jesus. Hence, as there was an infinite distance between the Lord Jesus and the best hypocrite, so the likeness that they have of the Lord Jesus makes a difference now. And look, as there is a difference between a plant and a beast, a beast and a man, so there is a glorious life which saints have begun here in this life, which none have but themselves. 1 Pet. v. 10. They have the "first fruits," the which is meat and drink, which no man knows of that lies in hypocrisy and sins.

Reason 4. If there should be no difference, then these evils would follow: 1. This lays a foundation of contempt of grace, and of the beauty of holiness in the hearts and lives of God's people; for look, as it is in the work of the Son in redemption, if Christ should have died as much for Judas as for Peter, and suspended the act of faith to apply this on the free will of either, then Judas had as much cause to thank Christ for his kindness as Peter; and Peter had no more cause of blessing Christ for his love in redeeming him than Judas; and what cold praises will he then give him! So if the Spirit of Christ should sanctify or call a saint no more than a hypocrite, then the one has no more cause to be thankful for the work of the Spirit than the other; and when a man comes to look upon the work of the Spirit, and the graces of it, there is cold water cast upon those; this is no more than what a hypocrite has. Christ has not only redeemed by price, but also by power, from the power of Satan, sin, darkness, delusion; and not to be thankful for this is not to

be thankful for the redemption of Christ. Thou shalt never have it then that dost despise the Spirit of grace, whereby thou art but commonly sanctified.

2. Because this abolishes the use of all conditional promises made in the word; for you know they are made to some qualification or work of the Spirit in a man, some to mourning, poverty, faith, hunger, lostness, etc.; now, if there should be no difference between seeming works in hypocrites and these, then, 1. The truth of the promises is destroyed; for the Lord saith, "They that hunger shall be satisfied." I will answer, Hypocrites may hunger, and yet not be satisfied. 2. The use of these promises should be lost; for why should a man then cast his soul upon God's faithfulness in the promise, when it is but common love to him and hypocrites? If it be replied, the one has Christ, the other not, I answer, it is very true; but then I ask, who is he a Christ to? It must needs be to a particular people described in the word by their peculiar qualities, flowing from their forms and subjects by which they are known; and now consider, (Rev. xxii. 19,) "Is God a God of the dead, and not of the living only?"

3. Because this makes the most holy men that ever lived deceivers of themselves and others; only look upon John, Christ's beloved disciple and bosom companion; he had received the anointing to know him that is true, "and he knew he knew him." 1 John ii. 3. But how did he know that? He might be deceived, (as it is strange to see what a melancholy fancy will do, and the effects of it; as honest men are reputed to have weak brains, and never saw the depths of the secrets of God.) What is his last proof? "Because we know his commandments," i. e., we have them writ in our hearts, and keep them, though we can not fulfill them, it makes us every way more holy. Christ doth not keep them only, but we through his grace keep them; thus he proves it by a work in him. Now, thus I reply: If all works in the souls of saints be common to hypocrites, then John went upon false grounds, deceived himself and all that heard him, and all the churches that ever were to this day.

Section III.

Use 1. *Of Confut.* To the Papists, who, in their writings, seek to shame the churches of Christ, saying, that they deny all "inherent righteousness or graces," making a man just by the righteousness of Christ; and in the mean while to remain like a carcass or ghost, or a painted sepulcher, full of rottenness within.

Three or four of these archers that have shot these arrows I have met with, whereby they wound the heart of profession, and keep the people in a professed enmity and opposition against the ways of God's grace. Now, we do not only deny this, but we profess that the Lord doth not only, out of the riches of his grace, accept us in Christ, but out of the same love sends down the Spirit of grace, not only to make us civil and moral, or hypocritical, but that the Lord works thereby such a change as is not to be found in the most refined hypocrite's breathing. And we profess, though our justification doth not consist in this, yet whoever hath not this is not justified (whatever he may imagine) in the sight of God. And the Lord grant the churches of the Lord Jesus may never open the mouths of those blasphemers of his name, in denying all righteousness in ourselves at all; deny it to justify, deny it not altogether.

Use 2. *Of Confut.* Of an old Arminian error; for they hold and maintain an "inherent righteousness," but that there is no difference between the graces of believers and hypocrites, only in their continuance, and that is by chance, too, and doubtful, viz., if they hold on, and for this purpose cite many scriptures, three passages especially, that of Ezek. xviii. 24, "If the righteous man forsake," etc., which is spoken of rotten Pharisaical hypocrites falling far short of what the saints have; and the parable of the seed, "They all sprang up;" where it is manifest the soil was naught, out of which they that fell away did grow; and, (Heb. x. 29,) "Blood wherewith they were sanctified," which is meant of such as had some inward enlightening, and lasting and external profession really not in appearance only in them, yet not any saving and effectual work; but, thus by making grace common, they make it vile; and under a color of making all men watchful, they destroy all faith in God's faithfulness and promise, especially until a man come to die. Divines have many strong arguments against them, and show, however there may be decays, and relapses, and winter seasons of the saints, yet ever there remains in them the "seed of God." 1 John iii. 9; John iv. 14.

The main ground of this their conceit is double.

1. False observation, in beholding many fall off that were not stars, but snuffs, glorious professors for a time; and lest they should be mad without reason herein, they search the Scriptures, and in four thousand years find but four or five that fall away; David, Solomon, Hymeneus, Alexander, and Demas, none of which, if examined, will serve their turn.

2. A great mistake of the work of grace, together with their

own experience, for they, conceiving grace to be but a mean thing, and not understanding it, because they never felt it in themselves, hence make no difference between one man and another, and hence maintain apostasy from grace. I hope I need not stir you up to abhor this conceit, considering what has been said. I grant, indeed, a man may fall away from grace, considering grace without Christ to keep it. But yet it is in itself such a living fountain, as in itself does not perish, though it may; and in respect of Christ, it can not.

Object. Did not Adam fall from all his grace?

Ans. Yes, because he had neither the covenant of grace, nor the Spirit of grace, nor power of grace to support and keep him; but it is God's covenant now to write his law, to put his fear in the heart, never to depart, and to give the Spirit of Christ, who is now risen from the dead. "Because I live, you shall live also," (John xiv. 19,) and "power to keep us." 1 Pet. i. 5. So that though it is Christ that keeps a man from falling, yet the truth is, he that does fall from grace, as though it was a common fading thing, or does fall from Christ, he never had Christ at all; (John iv. 14,) "The water that I shall give shall be a spring of living water," not of dead graces, yet quickened by the Spirit, and helped continually. And it is kept till life of glory comes, where it is swallowed up in the ocean of perfection.

Use 3. Hence we see the difference between the graces of hypocrites and saints does not only lie in the efficient cause, viz., the Spirit of Christ barely considered in itself, for then there should be no difference at all; for there are not two Spirits, and the same Spirit that works in the faithful, the same Spirit is in the unfaithful to work many strange works in them. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 4. Neither does supernatural power of the Spirit distinguish, (I mean that which is above the strength of nature, not that which is above the use of nature; for nature crooks all God's works to itself,) for the gifts of prophecy and common joy are above the strength of mere nature, but the difference lies in the work itself. As it is in creation, the least spear of grass has the same power to make it that made heaven and angels; is there no difference then? Yes, it lies in the very work or effect of that power. And as it is in a cedar and a fly, there is more excellency in the former, in some respects, but the latter has another life, which the other has not; so the meanest believer is better than the most glorious hypocrite. And look as it was with Saul, when he was anointed king, there was a new spirit came upon him, the spirit of a king, which common subjects had not; so when God makes us kings and priests unto Christ, there

comes another spirit upon us, which common men have not. I know there is the Spirit itself in the saints, as it is not in other men. But how is it there? I know it is there by faith, but not only by this, but by certain peculiar effects which are not in other men. As it is with the soul, it is in the body, hence works a life which is not in any brute creature; so it is here. And hence it is said, "The world can not receive it." John xiv. 17. Mal. iii. 2, 3, "Who is able to bear his coming? because he comes to purify," etc. Yet still the Spirit, barely considered in itself, puts no difference, unless it be in respect of the work itself. O, therefore, look to it, do not say, I have now the Spirit and Christ. But what does Christ work there? John xv. 1, 2. There are but two sorts of branches there, fruitless and fruitful; the difference is in the very fruits of them, etc.

Use 4. O, then terror to them that content themselves with common works, and so think their estates good. You have been terrified, confessed, and repented; Judas did so. You have reformed many things, and take delight to draw nigh to God in ordinances; those hypocrites did so. Isaiah. You have had great ravishments, and seen the glory of heaven, of saints; Balaam did so. You have beheld and seen the Lord Jesus, as if present on earth; many saw him, heard him, and were lifted up to heaven by him, and shall see him at last in glory indeed. O, but my desires are good; many shall seek and not enter. O, therefore, consider of your estate, and tremble, and set before thee all the mercy the Lord embraceth his people with; and say, O, that mercy for me; and follow him till he has done it.

Section IV.

Use 5. Hence it may appear that the true believer may know the blessedness of his estate, by the peculiarness of a work within him. For if, indeed, there should be no difference between those graces that be in hypocrites and in saints, if no difference between love, and faith, and desire in one, and that which is in another, then none could know the blessedness of their estates by any work; but seeing that the Lord has made a vast and a known difference, so that God knows it, and themselves know it, as has been proved, and all the world might know it, but that they want eyes to see men's hearts, and they shall know it at the last day to their eternal anguish, "when the hidden things of darkness" and the "secrets of all hearts shall be opened;" then it must needs follow, from the knowledge of such a work, a man may conclude his blessed and safe estate. By work I mean

no Popish good work, nor consider a work without a peculiar word of promise made thereunto. If we should ask a woman married to another husband, how she knows such a one is her husband, she would manifest it by those peculiar acts, or works, or manifestations of a husband to her. She has known he has forsaken great offers, and come to her. Her heart was most opposite, was at last overcome to forsake all; then they entered into a peculiar bond of covenant, so that they can not part; and though they do depart, yet they stay not long; so here. If you should have asked the Israelites how they did know they should be saved from the destroying angel, — Why, the Lord has promised to save us. You that do what? That "sprinkle the door posts with the blood." So the destroying angel of God's presence shall destroy millions of people, and that in the night time, when they least suspect it. Notwithstanding all deliverances, miracles, plagues, and repentances, shall you be preserved? Yes; the Lord has promised it and revealed it. To whom? To them that have their door posts sprinkled with Christ's blood, apprehended by the work of faith. Rom. iii. 24, 25; Heb. x. 22. If one should have asked the Lord Jesus himself whom he loveth, he would (John x.) answer, "his sheep," for, "for them he lays down his life," be they feeble or strong. If one should ask, further, who are his sheep, he would describe them by several properties, as he has done, John x. Such as "know me," as "hear me" only, as "follow me." So, if you ask a believer that question, How do you know you are loved? it is good to answer with Christ, I am his sheep, for whom he has laid down his life, when I was lost and went astray. But how do you know that? Is he now to answer like Christ; by these properties wrought in me, or no? If you say, No; because all these a hypocrite may have; then the Lord Jesus has done very weakly in describing his own sheep by such properties to be his, which discover them no more than so. It is true, a hypocrite has something like all these, but not these indeed. If you say, Yes; then a man may know his blessed estate by these. The promises; (Prov. viii. 17,) "I love them that love me." But how do you know you love the Lord? There is the question. If Satan and blind carnal reason ask this question, you will be filled with accusations, and never satisfy them; for he that accused Job to God's face will much more to their own faces accuse saints of hypocrisy. If uncharitable men, that never had the love of Christ abiding in their hearts, you will never satisfy them. But if the Lord ask the question in his word, hold there; and the work is so clear that, though there has been

much decay, yet, after recovery, the soul dares eye the Son, and say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." John xxi. 17. Hence by this work you may come to know your safe estate.

1. A man may know his blessed estate in respect of time past, by a work, i. e., with a word or promise made to it, and the Spirit revealing of it, viz., the everlasting thoughts and election of God toward him. Rom. viii. 28, "Them that love God, who are called according to his purpose," notwithstanding all their miseries and sins; yet love him, and so "called according to his purpose," for so the apostle raises up his thoughts. I know the world is full of want of love, and think it easy so to do; and like the devil, are very kind to the Lord, as they think, while the Lord pleases them; who yet, when the time of patience is out, shall be eternal blasphemers of him. But there is such love whereby saints may raise up their hearts thus to see God's love; (1 Thess. i. 4, 5,) "Knowing your election of God." How so? Immediately. Some divines think angels see it not so, and that it is peculiar to God so to do, but mediately; for our word came in power and in much assurance, to make you enlarged for God, to turn you from idols unto God; and to wait for Christ in heaven, seeing him here but as in a glass. And by the same Spirit Paul saw it; by the same Spirit they might much more see it; and so the elect may see it. And if experience may be added to the truth, how many of God's people daily, knowing their work of vocation and glory, ascend from these lower stairs of the Lord's ladder to the highest of election, and there are swallowed up with eternal wonderment, filling their hearts with that joy and peace, that the weak tabernacle of flesh and blood can not bear the weight of that glory long; that by works see the promise, and by the promise of love behold eternal thoughts of love; and hence promises are said to be given to saints, "before the world began." Because promises to them that thirst, mourn, believe, etc., are not bare words, but eternal counsels, in which you see God's purpose.

2. In respect of time present, by it we know our present union to the Lord Jesus; (1 John ii. 4,) "He that saith I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar." Yes, that is true negatively; but may a man, ought a man to see or know his union positively by this? Ans. verse 5, Many said they did know and love the Lord; but he that keeps his word, O, they are sweet! It is heaven to cleave to him in every command, it is death to depart from any command. "Hereby we know that we are in him." If it were possible to ask of angels how they

know they are not devils, they would answer, The Lord's will is ours; so here, how do you know you have not the nature of devils, and so, in state of devils, bound there till the judgment of the great day? Because God has changed our vile natures, and made our wills like unto his glorious will, etc. So for forgiveness; (Luke vii. 47,) "Much is forgiven her," etc.

3. In respect of the state of glory for time to come. We may know our blessed estate by a work; (1 Cor. ii. 9,) "Eye has not seen what the Lord has prepared for them that love him;" (Ps. xxxi. 19,) "O, how great is thy goodness laid up for them that fear thee!" (2 Cor. v. 3,) "If clothed with Christ," whole Christ; (verse 5, 6,) "He has fitted us for this, and given the earnest of the Spirit," which (Rom. viii. 23) "are first fruits of glory, therefore we are confident."

Object. But, if you look to yourselves, you will have peace to-day and sorrow to-morrow.

Nay, we are always confident; and yet Paul did not now go on in a covenant of works. Now, whether a man first comes to know his estate by a work, word, and spirit, so that there are three things to evidence our happy estate, or whether two things only, viz., a general word and spirit, I intend not to dispute, because it makes nothing against the truth in hand. Only this I say; it is very dangerous to "limit the Holy One of Israel," especially in his freedom of working, to breathe light and life, and divine consolation, when, and by what means and promise, and in what measure he will. Christ, when he was here on earth, would say sometimes, "Thy sins are forgiven," (Matt. ix. 2;) sometimes, "Be it unto thee as thou believest," (Matt. ix. 28, 29;) nay, "Be it unto thee as thou wilt." Matt. xv. 27. If in these inferior things, much more in greater. Christ is now gone, and we have no immediate speech with him, but in his word, and he is free to speak to his people according as he pleases, and when they need. And, therefore, let me entreat you, brethren, to be wary in your speeches in dashing all promises in pieces. What Christian heart can see God's truth mangled, without being angry, and mourning for the hardness of men's hearts? The Lord has spoken peace to some men's hearts thus, he that is lost shall be found; "He that believes in me shall never hunger, and he that comes to me shall never thirst;" and seeing this, they conclude (the Lord's Spirit helping them, for sometimes they can not do it) peace. For the major is the word, the minor experience, and the conclusion the Lord's Spirit's work quickening your spirits to it. Now, say some, how do you know this? Thus you may be mistaken, for

many have been deceived thus. Grant that, and shall a child not take bread when it is given him, though dogs snatch at it? What should one do then? Bring their work to the light, to the trial of the word, which you know does but two things.

1. Shows what God is. And,—

2. What man is, and so discovers and describes all hypocrisy of men, and all grace of men; now, if it will not bear the trial of the word, convince them they have gone on in a covenant of works indeed. But if it will, hold there, take heed then of false witness against the truth of God; so that do not condemn the work of Christ in any man, where it is of the right stamp, and has Christ's image upon it, and so pluck men from their claim to Christ's love revealed in his promise. But learn to difference it once, and then I am persuaded the sad differences that begin to appear would soon be ended among all them that love the truth in Christ Jesus; (2 Pet. i. 4,) "Whereby are given to us, that have precious faith, exceeding great and precious promises." The Lord gives little to his people. O, but he gives them rich promises; bonds and bills, and writings to show for rich grace, and riches of glory, and riches of peace. O, but these promises hypocrites may have; they may be lost, and hunger and thirst, and believe. What as those do that have their interest in these promises? Why they are called "precious promises"? Precious promises are not common things. Precious promises are not the portion of a base world. Precious things God never gives to dogs; and, believe me, you may come to know the price of them in the times of your horror on death bed, that account them common now. O, but many rest on promises without Christ. That is all one; the faithful by them come to partake of the divine nature of Christ, of his Spirit, of divine consolations, peace, grace; and this is not building on a work, or resting on a bare promise, when it carries you to Christ and the everlasting embraces of him. It is no matter what promise gives peace, so long as it lands us in Christ. And, therefore, a man may know his blessed estate by a work; only let me put in three cautions.

1. Take heed you do not in your judgment, or in your practice, go about to move the Lord to love you by your works, though it be of his making. For all works are fruits, no causes of the Lord's love; for this is Popery, indeed, and it is hypocrisy. Is. lviii. 3, 4, "Why have we fasted, and prayed, and delighted to draw near unto God?" etc. But look upon the work and promise, and be the more vile in thine own eyes, that the Lord should promise, or do any thing for thee. So that when

you feel any saving work, go not to God with expectation of any good in the name of that work, but in the name of that free grace and faithfulness of God, which has moved him to make such precious promises to such as those are that have it. "Hast thou not said, Solomon shall reign?" 1 Kings i. 13. So here.

2. Take heed you do not sit down contented with the work, and quiet yourselves with that, never looking to behold his face that gave it, that wrought it. The "poor blind man" (John ix.) had a mighty cure upon him, and some seed of faith; the Lord wrought the work, but hid himself. He wondered at the great change, was affected with his love; at last the Lord Jesus comes himself, "Dost thou believe? saith he, Lord, who is he? I am he. Then he worshiped him." Verses 35–37. So it is with the Lord in his way of working grace. O, therefore, long to see him here in his glass, and in glory, in his face fully. Truly there is no work of Christ that is right, but it carries the soul to long for more of it, and to be with him that has done it. Many Christians, when they have the work, run away with it as a good sign, and look to the promise; O, but long not, look not to behold the Lord. "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye foolish people and unwise?" Were it not enough that your sins make? but will you make works and promises also a partition wall between the Lord and your souls? I profess the Lord will fire such work about your ears, and dry up all your pits, that you may long for to drink out of the well of life itself. And it is a black mark of unbelief that shall keep thee from rest. Heb. iv. 3, 10, 11. O, but when you long to see him; "O, when shall I appear before God?" Ps. lxiii. 2–4. Then the Lord will fill thee. As leaden rings with a pearl, so promises and Christ put together (not divided) are exceeding precious.

3. Do not look to see the work or promise yours, nor receive any consolation from either, unless the Lord appear in both. John x. 16, "They shall hear my voice;" for so most men bring home human, not divine consolation from a work. But, O, fetch it from heaven; as in Peter's redemption. Acts xii. You reason, and others tell you, and yet you are full of fears and doubts; and thou criest, Lord, persuade me, Lord, persuade me; yea, hold you here, now you are where you ought to be. Do you think Christ is filled with grace and life for you, and not with consolation for you too? Only use means, and so look up to him.

Section V.

O, therefore, content not yourselves with any hopes your estate is right, until you find this difference; for the Lord speaks

peace only to his people, and his people are differenced from all others. Hence how can you say peace is yours, till this be cleared up unto you?

I shall speak to two sorts of people.

1. Those that content themselves with any thing that may stop and quiet conscience, any slight work, any poor desires, any hedge faith, any moral performances, any groundless conjectures will serve their turn. And, being full, they can hear all sermons, no wind will shake them, no searching, threatening truths concern them; they are all so good, that they think the Lord means not them. Well, I say no more to you but this: Know it, that the time is coming that the Lord Jesus will try you, and examine you to the very bran; and will descry all thy paint, and open all thy lusts and thoughts; and thy nakedness, and shame, and confusion shall be seen of all the world.

2. Those that content themselves with the revelation of the Lord's love, without the sight of any work, or not looking to it. I desire the Lord to reveal himself abundantly more and more, to all that have the Lord savingly revealed unto them. For this is the misery, Christ is a hidden thing, and so is his love. Yet consider, —

1. God reveals not his love to any hypocrite, but to his people that have a work far beyond them.

2. That the testimony of the Spirit does not make a man a Christian, but only evidenceth it. As it is the nature of a witness, not to make a thing to be true, but to clear and evidence it. And, therefore, whether the Spirit in the first or second place clears God's love, I dispute not, because it is doubtful; yet be sure you find out the difference, viz., some work in you, that no hypocrite under heaven has. Else what peace can you have?

1. Hereby you come to prevent the strongest delusion that Satan has to keep men in bondage to himself, viz., to give men great peace, and sometimes great ravishment, while they are in their sins, that so he may harden them there still. Luke xi. 21. Now, by taking this course, and going to Christ to untie the knots of Satan, you do now undermine the main plot of Satan, you break his head, having recourse to Christ to do this. His policy is, let your heart alone, let Christ alone with that. But now you may be sure all your consolation is of the right make.

2. Otherwise you quench the Spirit, and resist the testimony of the Spirit, at least one great part of it. For the Spirit when it does come to witness God's love, it answers all the doubts and objections of the soul that it had before. Now, the great doubt

of God's people is not only, Am I elected, am I justified and accepted? but, Am I called, am I sanctified, are not my desires, my faith, my love counterfeit, which I may have, and yet go to hell? Now, the Spirit, when it comes, clears all doubts, not fully, but gradually; for it is the most clearing witness, and, therefore, (John xiv. 18–20,) "At that day you shall know that I am in you, and you in me, and I in the Father." The Spirit does not only say, Christ is out of you in heaven, preparing and interceding; but in you, sanctifying, preparing thee for glory, that art a vessel of glory; "and you in me," by faith, by love, desire, etc. Now, when a man shall say, I look to no work, but only for the Spirit to reveal the Lord's love; in seeming to desire the Spirit, he doth resist the Spirit of God.

3. Otherwise you shall be deprived of all that abundant consolation which the word holds out before you. For suppose you say, I look not to the work of God in me, to receive any consolation from that, or any promise made to that; I look only to the revelation of the Spirit.

Ans. 1. There is never a promise but the Comforter is in it, and they are given for that end, to give strong consolation; now, if you look to no work, nor no conditional promise, nor to find the condition in you, (which yet Christ must and doth work,) Lord, what abundance of sweet peace do you lose! Rev. vii. 17, The Lamb leads them to the "living fountain of waters, and God wipes away all tears." And, for aught I know, you shall die for thirst that refuse to do it. "O, slow of heart to believe all that the Scriptures have writ"—all that God has spoken. Ought you not thus to be comforted?

But, 2. If you look to a Spirit without a work, whilst you do seek consolation from the Spirit, you can not avoid the condemnation of the word. You say, the Spirit has spoken peace to you. But do you love Christ? I look not to that, but to the Spirit. Why, the word saith, "He that loves not him, let him be anathema." So, is the league between your sins and your souls broken? *Ans.* I look not to that. Why, John saith, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." 1 John iii. 8, 9. Are you new creatures? I look not to that. Why, the word saith, "Unless you be born again, you can not enter into the kingdom of God." And the Lord knows, but on your death beds, thus Satan may assault you, and then will the Lord say, Nay, look to yourself. The word shall be Belshazzar's terror. Consider Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

4. Look to it, else you shall be deprived of further manifestation and communion with the Lord Jesus. The Lord reveals

not all of himself at once; the day dawns before the sun riseth, and there is a further manifestation of the Lord in this life to his people, not for, but when they, indeed, maintain such works before him; (John xiv. 21,) "I will manifest myself unto him." How? O, saith Christ, "I'll come and sup with him." Never think the Lord will dishonor himself so far as to come into a filthy heart. Sin does and will grieve God's Spirit, that he will only accuse, not speak peace to you, till all is mended.

5. Else you may fall everlastingly away, as those, (Heb. x. 29,) They had "received the knowledge of the truth and were sanctified," but their wills and hearts never changed. O, take heed there be left "only a fearful looking for of vengeance." You stand on the brim of destruction every moment that do it not. For it is plain hypocrisy not to bring works to the light; it is not ceasing to go on in a covenant of work. John iii. 20. And if the Lord does love you, and you will not take the counsel of the word, the fire of the Lord shall try you. And when that comes, and conscience shall ask, Wherefore comes all this great evil upon me? when your miseries shall be great, O, it shall be said, This was because I loved not the Lord, I forsook the Lord, etc. O, therefore, look to the Lord now to cleanse you! Zech. xiii. 9.

Object. It is true there is a difference; but is it possible to know it, seeing that a false heart may go so far? especially to know it in itself?

Ans. It is true, it is difficult for men, ministers, or angels to reveal it; yet it is easy for the Lord Jesus to reveal it, and this he does do. This light discovers hidden things as they are; his "Spirit leads unto all truth." And this is a peculiar privilege and honor as for God to know; so they, partaking of the divine nature, for them to know their own hearts. Jer. xvii. 9. And although it be an easy thing for hypocrites, that never knew what grace meant, to be mistaken, yet after the Lord has made it known to the elect, it is no easy matter to deceive them. As it is with apothecaries, that know when they meet with counterfeit drugs; or jewellers, that know the difference between Bristol stones and pearls. As the blind man saith, "Whereas I was blind, now I see;" so I was dead, now behold I live. "Old things are passed away, all things are become new." 1 Pet. ii. 9. They are "called out of darkness into marvelous light." If they could not know a difference, why would the Lord command them to add one grace to another, and "grow in grace"? May they not well reply, Alas! Lord, I know not trash from treasure? I know nothing thou hast commanded me to do, but hypocrites

may have and do. I say, therefore, the work may be seen in itself, and that by a threefold light.

I. The light of the Word, which is a divine revelation of or concerning God and man, and of man, not only as fallen in Adam, (which discovers all his sins, their nature, their end, etc.,) but as risen again and recovered in Christ; the birth, being, breeding of the new creature. It discovers all hypocrisy of the heart, so that they shall be forced to say, The Lord has found me out; and saints shall say, The Lord has done me good. As if the question be, Whom doth the Lord Jesus love? You need not go to heaven for it; "the word is nigh thee." Those that love Christ: who are those? "Those that keep his commandments," etc. So that the word is a light to discover truth from falsehood, the work of grace from the work of hypocrisy; and by this light saints may and do know what the work is. And it argues dreadful unbelief and hypocrisy not to do thus. John iii. 19–21. And this all the saints are commanded to do. 2 Pet. i. 19. "We (sealed with the Spirit) have a sure word of prophecy," etc. "Which is a light in a dark place," both to reveal God's heart and our hearts unto us; hence "it makes us wise to salvation."

II. The light of the Spirit going with the word reveals the work, without which the work can not be seen no more than a book written in the fairest hand or print can be seen without light to see it by. And hence God's people can not presently read what the Lord has written, etc. 1 John iii. 24. That look as it is with Scripture, Papists say they are obscure, and how do we know them? We answer, there are divine characters of majesty and glory stamped upon them, whereby we, by the same Spirit that writ them, see them, and are persuaded of them; so here. Or as it is in the work of creation: how can any see God in it? We say, in the very workmanship appears his power and eternity, wisdom, goodness, etc. Now, although atheists can not see these, yet others do and can. So in the workmanship of the elect it is so. It is the glass of God's peculiar mercy and love. Now, they that never had it know it not, but the saints do, by the Spirit especially. Thus far we grant the Spirit's testimony, that it must reveal it.

III. The light of experience and sense. For saints have an experimental knowledge of the work of grace, by virtue of which they come to know it as certainly — as we dispute against the Papists — as by feeling heat, we know fire is hot; by tasting honey, we know it is sweet. Now, this is diversely apparent to experience.

1. By meditation of the work, in comparing it with the rule; for no dead creature can perform one spiritual living act of life; no, not a good thought, though they may think of good things. Now, the Lord has given to his people a most exact rule of life; hence, by meditation, they may see how far it agrees or disagrees with the rule, and judge of a living act by it; and so of the God and Lord of life to be there. Hence, "try yourselves; know you not that Christ is in you?" etc. And hence I never knew yet a thinking Christian deceived, and hence I fear all that make not this their trade, will be to seek, and so to begin again. O, the Lord teacheth his people hidden mysteries by this.

2. By the operation and working of it; for grace may be in the heart, and yet lying asleep, and raked up under the ashes, not seen, not felt; but in the operation of it, it may, which is peculiar as the form is. For how do we know we love or delight in any creature? By the operation of love and delight. How did Christ manifest to the Pharisees that they were "of their Father the devil"? Why, "his lusts they would do." So how can any tell he knows the Lord, or loves the Lord, or believes in the Lord? The operation discovers it. James ii. 22. And hence, (Gal. v. 6,) "faith which works by love." And though hypocrites act like them, yet there is a peculiar virtue in the one that is not in the other.

3. By their temptations and trials. Deut. viii. 2, "The Lord has led thee forty years to prove thee, and show thee what was in thy heart." Rom. v. 4, 5, "Tribulation breeds experience, and that hope," or expectation of that which shall never make us ashamed. I will name no more. But look as we said to them that cried out against prayer without a book, we answer, Has a man dwelt in his own heart so many years, and not known his wants, to make him pray? nor the Lord's work of mercy to make him bless; so here.

Object. 2. But if a man looks to his work, this will interrupt and break his peace.

Ans. 1. It may and doth break and interrupt a false peace; as many say, yet they trust in the Lord's mercy, O, it is a presumptuous peace.

2. Neglect of this yields most unpeaceableness, even in them that are sincere. You have peace, and then break out into pride and passion again; then question all. The Spirit will sigh, not sing in that bosom. Ps. xxxi. 1–3; Judg. xvi. 20. Neither can you avoid the condemnation of the word, though you maintain consolation from the Spirit, nor suspicion of hypocrisy.

3. This is the way to peace. 2 Pet. i. 7–9; Matt. xi. 29, 30.

Christ's "yoke is easy," and yields peace in life and after life, too. Rev. xiv. 13, "Their works follow them." So that hereby comes double peace and rest.

1. From horror.

2. From sin, which is wonderful great.

Object. 3. But I look to Christ, I look to no work. If I have him I have all.

Ans. True. First look to have him, to be comprehended by him, that so you may comprehend him. But because you look for all in him, will you look for nothing from him? Will you have Christ sit in heaven, and not look that he subdue your lusts by the work of his grace, and so sway in your hearts? You despise his kingdom then. Do you seek for pardon in the blood of Christ, and never look for the virtue and end of that blood to wash you and make you without spot? etc. You despise his priesthood and blood then. Do you look for Christ to do work for you, and you not to do Christ's work and bring forth fruit to him? You despise his honor then. John xv. 8. If I were to discover a hypocrite or a false heart, I would say, It is he that shall set up Christ, but loathe his work. To have Christ is sweet, as Capernaum; to follow Christ is heavy. John xiv. 21, 23.

Object. 4. But if I have the witness of the Spirit, what need I have any other difference?

Ans. The witness of the Spirit makes not the first difference. For, first, a man is a believer and in Christ, and justified, called, sanctified, before the Spirit does witness it; else the Spirit should witness to an untruth and a lie. For unbelievers are under wrath.

2. If the Spirit does not witness this peculiar work to be in you, and clear it to you, tell me how you can escape the anguish of conscience and the terrors of hell in your hearts, unless conscience be seared and blinded. When the Lord shall set conscience to ask and say, I choose none but whom I call, I call none but whom I justify, I justify none but whom I sanctify, and that not with a common, but a peculiar work. Is it so with you? If it be dark or doubtful, can you but think all your joys have been dreams and your witness delusions? Therefore look unto this.

Object. 5. But if I should do this, I should look to find some cleanness in myself, whereas I am to see nothing but ungodliness. Goats are clean creatures.

Ans. 1. When you stand before Christ's judgment seat to receive pardon, you are here to look upon all as unclean and yourselves ungodly.

2. When you come to look upon your sanctification, you are to see it as it is, mixed with sin and corruption, and so cause of being abased as low as hell for what is done; yet that cleanness and truth there is you must see too. Rom. vii. He felt "a law warring against the law of his mind;" yet he felt another law, too, which he made an evidence of his being in Christ. Rom. viii. 1. Giving all the glory of it to Christ, "Not I, but Christ." And yet Paul was no goat. It is one thing to see grace in myself, another thing to look upon it as mine, to clear me withal. You are to see the Lord's work, and not appropriate it to yourself. And this, let me say, if there be no more than ungodliness in thee, and thou seest no more, thou shalt never see God in heaven. Heb. xii. 14. Nor didst never see him yet. 1 John iii. 6, 8. O, therefore, look to a work!

1. If you do not, you have no peace. For the Lord's sake do it before fire try you, or you stand scorching before the tribunal of God.

2. The sweet of it will be great; as there is nothing more bitter than Christ's departing with his holy presence, so nothing so sweet as Christ's cleaving to thee in his holy presence. And truly sin was never bitter to that soul to which the work of the Lord Jesus was not sweet, though it is accounted by some almost Popery to speak so. To this all promises are made; (1 Tim. iv. 8,) "Godliness hath them." It is true, they are made to Christ; i. e., to Christ mystical. 1 Cor. xii. 12. Yet to the head as the foundation and conveyer of all to the elect. Eph. i. 23; 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. If you despise work, you despise promises, and so despise Christ; and the Lord knows what use you may have of them before you die.

Section VI.

Use 7. *Of Exhort.* To the people of God, in whom the Lord has made this great change, and made a difference between you and all the world. Take heed of denying your work, and this real apparent expression of the Lord's love. How many doubting, drooping spirits are there, that though others may see, and though themselves have felt, the sensible expression of the Lord's love, yet oft come to this conclusion, or fear that the Lord did never yet good unto me! And dispute against it, and think that this a hypocrite may have. Is. xlix. 14. There are two ways whereby grace is despised.

1. By making common grace special.

2. By making special grace common. The elect are apt to

do so before they are called, as Paul thought his innocent godliness gain; they are apt to do the latter when once in Christ. All this we may have, and yet to hell. O, take heed of despising this kindness which the Lord Jesus has not shown to the greatest potentates of the world.

Object. Yea, if I did but know it; but I am put to such fears and doubts about it that I know not what to make on it.

1. Do not think that thou art under the power of thy sin, when thou art at war with thy sin, and it with thee. For the Lord many times clears up his love to the soul, and it is better than life to him; but, then, winds arise and storms come, and sin and Satan assault, and now he cries out, he perishes, and that he was never redeemed by Christ, nor never saw Christ's love. Should his soul be thus insnared, thus assaulted, and no strength against it, and, therefore, being under the power of it, hence he never had pardon. They can not overcome their corruptions, though they strive against them; hence think they are under the power of them, and then say, Where is Christ's Spirit? etc. *Ans.* When Rebekah had twins, so that she was troubled, she went to the Lord, who told her, "The elder shall serve the younger." So there is flesh and spirit in saints, and these two are contrary, so that you can not do the things you would; and sometimes can not will, yet something opposeth this. Well, know it, that the elder and stronger shall serve the younger; it shall be, Lord. A man that is at war with another has received power against him, but victory is not gotten presently; so it is here; judgment shall come to victory. Though thou art bruised, and canst not raise up thyself, now, there is no fear of breaking; if God will not do that, none shall do it, and, therefore, thou shalt get victory. Only know, for the present thou hast power. Thou goest to all ordinances, and when no help there, raisest the power of heaven. O Lord, awake; "Awake, O arm of the Lord." Is. li. 9.

2. Do not think that the being of grace is lost, when it is hid, by the cessation of it for a time from acts. For it is hard to know whether grace be there, when acts are not seen nor felt; now, sometimes it is so; the heart is careless and negligent, ceaseth from acting, quencheth the flame of the Spirit. Hence come fears — Was there ever grace here? The sluggard's garden is full of nettles, and he saith, Was there ever good seed sown here? *Ans.* Consider, it is in this case, and it is in sin. Though the act of sin ceaseth, yet there is a bent of heart still toward it; and a carnal heart will return to his old bias and bent again. So though the act of grace ceaseth, yet there is an

inner man, a gracious bent and frame put upon the will; that though for a time it ceaseth acting, yet it will return to its old bent again, to its own nature, which is called "the seed of God," (1 John iii. 9,) from which a man can never fall. For in sleep there is cessation from acts, yet the frame remains still. In the old law, if any unclean thing fell on a pitcher, it was accounted unclean; but if in a spring, not, because it would work it out again; so here. There is a spring of grace, which may be muddied and stopped up, yet it will work itself clear again. And this God's people shall find, there is something in them that springs up to everlasting life all their days.

3. Do not judge only of the truth and measure of grace by what thou hast in thy hand of feeling, but by what thou hast in thy hand of faith in the promise. God has ever delighted to keep his people short of what they would have, and to give them but little, insomuch that they often question the truth of grace, feeling so little measure of it. Yet they look to the riches of God's grace, to the freeness and riches of the Lord's promise, and hang there, and plead that, and suck that breast. *Ans.* O, now consider thou art empty, but remember the Lord Jesus is full, and the promise is free and full. O, the riches of it, to give abundantly, and to work truth to thee! Hence it is there in the promise, and thy faith hangs on the promise for it. Why, it is thine by faith then. The nature of faith is to carry the soul empty to a promise and the Lord's grace, and Christ there, so that it knows not whither else to go for bread but here. Now, faith doing thus, it makes the promise and all of it thine. 2 Pet. i. 1, 4. Abraham had his child first in the promise, when he felt a dry body, and saw a barren womb. And, know it, it is infinite mercy to be kept up in the promise, and thou givest the Lord infinite glory by embracing of it now, and thou mayst triumph here. "Hast not said, Lord, that Solomon shall reign," and sin shall not? It shall not. O, rejoice, O heavens and earth, at this, for the Lord has visited me. God took from Paul his revelations, and sent distempers, that grace might be manifested in the promise.

4. Do not think that the Lord's heart is not toward thee, while he hides his face from thee. For there may be frowns in a father's face, and yet love in his heart; the Lord purposely hides himself from his people sometimes, especially when they begin to grow weary of him, or proud; but yet his heart is toward them still. Now, they think not so; when in utter darkness, then they think there is no love. The woman of Canaan besought Christ oft, yet he heard not, yet his heart was toward

her. How did that appear? Her heart and faith was still toward him, she would not leave him though she should have but crums. Is. xlv. 15, and viii. 17. And the Lord doth purposely hide his face in love, that his people's hearts may be toward him. Hosea v. 15, and vi. 7.

5. Do not judge of the Lord's love and heart toward you in these sad times by present feelings, but by the issue of them. For such is the Lord's carriage toward his people sometimes, that God seems wholly to cross them, and appears in all their ways with a drawn sword against them. He doth not only leave them to their enemies, as he did Samson, but to their sins, and to Satan to buffet them, that there is nothing but clouds of wrath, and no star appearing. Now, look to the issue, and "mark the upright man; his end is peace;" and consider this, Christ's kingdom is hid, and he brings contraries out of contraries, he makes darkness light, hell heaven, guilt pardon, weakness strength, and calls things that are not as though they were. Then, think within thyself, I will conclude nothing against myself, but stay and wait what the issue will be, which is ever glorious. James i. 2–4; 1 Pet. i. 5–7. Consider, has not the Lord done thee much good already? O, consider what is then behind.

6. Never enter into dispute with Satan, or thine own self, about thy estate, but taking and making Scripture and word to be the judge of the controversy. Fears come in you shall never have mercy, never have power. Who told you so? Doth the word say that? The Lord never gave himself to me, I fear it! Doth the word say so? Never was any as I. Doth the word say so? or, doth not the word say so? God delights to pick out the vilest, to send the physician to them that be sick. I can not see nor conceive any mercy. Doth the word say so? Are not the Lord's thoughts above thine? I have not that peace that others have, therefore the Lord intends none toward me. Doth the word say so? O, but others, if they knew me, would loathe me. Doth the word say so? When, as it saith, "Doubtless, then, thou art our father." Is. lxiii. 16. And bring before this judge both sides, not only what sin can say or may do against thee, but what the word of the Lord Jesus can say for thee; (Jer. xxxi. 18, 20,) Ephraim cries out of stubbornness, "O, but is not Ephraim my only son?" Hear Ephraim lamenting too. And hear nothing against a word. Look on Paul warring against Christ, and yet the law of Christ in him also. Luke xxiv. 25.

7. In times of greatest and smallest fears, remember to be

humble and vile in thine own eyes, worthy never to be beloved. And let the Lord have his will of thee, and this will give you peace. God denies mercy to that man that will be lord of it. To be sure, evidence mercy then he will not; and when he doth manifest it, it is then when poorest and vilest, and heart is meek and humble. Is. lvii. 15, 16; Matt. xi. 29. O, the Lord opens his heart and love, when once his will is dear. The Lord casts by his rod, and frowns now, and creates peace. Thus you may come to see the work of the Lord's grace in you.

The ministers, to take heed of making precious things common, by giving in false signs and evidences of love, but look up to the Lord for a special Spirit here.

To God's poor people and thankfulness. O, that he "hath called thee from darkness into marvelous light, into the kingdom of his dear Son!" O, that when so many come near to mercy, and fall short of it, yet me to be let in! Caleb and Joshua to be let into Canaan, when they rest so near, and all perish. Bless the Lord for all afflictions, fears, temptations, enemies, evils, hidings of his face; hereby he has but tried thee and purged away thy dross; and be comforted against all reproaches of hypocrisy and apostasy, and a proud world that cast filth in the face of holiness. "Now, we are sons of God, it appears not what we shall be, but we shall be like him in glory," in grace, in honor, in his kingdom; "for we shall see him as he is." And as for you that live, and lie, and bed it with your ease, lusts, loathe, and God sends you means, but the bellows are burnt, the lead is melted, and your dross not consumed; "reprobate silver shall men call you, and God shall destroy all your confidence." But you that are the Lord's, O that you would see what the Lord has done! He has put heaven into thy soul, and his work, which is more glorious than the creation of heaven and earth.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHOWING THAT THE HYPOCRISY OF THE HEART PROCEEDS FROM A WANT OF SAVING ILLUMINATION IN THE UNDERSTANDING.

SECTION I.

THE spring or the great cause and original of evangelical truth and hypocrisy is the mind of man.

For here there was an apparent difference between virgins in their practice and in their wills, as has been shown; yet the

Lord expresses it in general thus, that some of them were wise, (which is one part of the perfection of the understanding,) and some of them were foolish, (which is the great defect of light in the mind or understanding,) because the truth of the one, and the falsehood of the other, manifested what their hearts were, in their heads and minds; and the truth in the one, and hypocrisy in the other, did arise and was maintained by wisdom in some of their minds, and by folly in the mind of some others. Folly, or want of divine light, made the one unready for Christ; wisdom, or having of divine light, made the other prepared for him; not that it doth exclude the evil or change of the will and affections, but because they manifest themselves, and are maintained in the mind. Hence I say, one great reason or original of both lies in the mind. Matt. vi. 22, 23, "If thy eye be single, thy whole body is light," etc. The eye or mind of a man sits like a coachman, and guides the headstrong affections; if now this be blind, there will be falls and deviations in crooked ways; (John iii. 19, 20,) "Light is come." Now, what is the condemnation? "Men love darkness," i. e., will be blind, and having sore minds and hearts, will not look up to the sun. They see not, nor receive not the truth in love, and hence condemned, and *e contra*. Hence (Deut. xxix. 1–4) Moses sets down the causes of all their evils, "The Lord has not given you eyes to see to this day." They did see and hear by natural and acquired knowledge, but not by a divine, created, infused knowledge, all that God had wrought and done for them. Hence, when the Lord intends to seal down the Jews under unbelief, (Is. vi. 10,) the Lord then said, "Shut their eyes lest they see, and so be converted." The heart makes the eyes blind, and the mind makes the heart fat. A man that is at enmity with God, the Lord sets him against himself. Hence men are left of God to their own lusts. Luke xix. 42, 44, "O that thou hadst known! and they knew not the day of visitation." Hence, (Deut. xxxii. 29,) "O that this people had been wise to consider their latter end!" You know it is, in the Proverbs of Solomon, the frequent title of those that are sincere, and false-hearted, the one is called wise, and the other foolish; insomuch, that some divines have made a necessity of a change and turning about of the will, when there is fullness and clearness of light in the mind. Else they say a man might be sapient and yet impious too, which can not be. But I dispute not about that; there be many brute creatures that imitate the knowledge of man, yet there is no mind of man or reasonable soul in them; so hypocrites may have excellent abilities of reason, and yet fall short of that new mind,

the eye and director of the whole man, that the saints have. It is ever dark night with them, the sun of glory never did yet arise upon them.

Section II.

Because all divine light of glory is ever powerful, through Christ, to change the heart. Hence, if hypocrites had it, their hearts would be sincere, which is not so, and hence they ever want it, whatever light else they have; and hence those that have it must be sincere; (John viii. 32,) "You shall know the truth, and it shall make you free," i. e., from your bondage of fears and sins; hence David prays for light, (Ps. cxix. 33, 34,) and then he shall be set at liberty. As iron is drawn to the loadstone by a secret, hidden virtue, so there is a secret virtue of divine light that draws the most iron heart; nay, changes it; (John xvii. 17,) "Sanctify them through thy truth," etc. For this is the difference between God and man's teaching; and, hence, when the gospel comes in power, it comes in demonstration; whereby the heart is mightily overpowered, that it can not but fall down before God, whose voice and truth it hears. And hence the young man saw some worth in Christ, but not enough, and hence he forsook Christ. Truth is not stones, but bread to them that see it indeed.

2. Because the mind is the first inlet of all sin and grace, and hence all hypocrisy springs from thence. Hence, when Satan laid his train to blow up all the world by sin, he first enters into dispute and parley with Eve, and, as the apostle speaks, deceived her; (1 Tim. ii. 14,) "The woman was first deceived." And hence, when Satan came with his last and strongest temptation, to draw away the heart of Christ to him, he attempted it by a sudden presenting to his mind the glory of all the world, hoping thereby to get in. Nay, in the unpardonable sin there is *summa cæcitas*, to call evil good, and good evil. And hence the Pharisees that did commit it were called blind; and when sin is entered, it strengthens itself by the mind; (Heb. iii. 13,) "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." As it is with cities, they might easily be taken, but for the forts that are built about them, and the soldiers that are in them; so men set up their hearts and minds above and against the Lord Jesus. The power of sin lies in the power of darkness, as the power of a weak state in the wisdom of its counsel. And hence, when the Spirit comes, all the work of it is expressed by conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment; because, convince one effectually, and you convert him. And hence, when the Lord comes with

life, he comes in by light; (Eph. v. 14,) "Christ shall give thee light." And hence, when the gospel comes to take away all darkness and sin, it is said, Satan's chief policy lies in this, to blind men's eyes, (2 Cor. iv. 4,) either by obscuring the light, or by kindling a false light in their minds, that they shall think they see when their darkness remains; not but that there is filth enough in the will, but Satan knows that Christ shines into the heart by the mind; and hence he blinds men, and then he knows he shall damn men. Beloved, if men had the Spirit, it would lead them into all truth; now, this the world can not receive, because (John xiv. 17) "it knows him not." This is that which opens and shuts to all life and sin; not that bare light can change the will, but the Lord doth it by the power of his truth and light. And as it is with water coming through some mines, there is a healing virtue in it; so light coming from everlasting love, it heals men of their evils.

Section III.

Use 1. Hence see the danger of two sorts of men especially.

1. Of those that fly from the light, which is done sundry ways. I will mention only one that is used by a false heart. A man is troubled in mind concerning his estate, fears death and hell, and so few shall be saved, how can I be one? etc. How comes he to fear? The Lord has, by his Spirit in the word, discovered and found out his sin; the thief is taken, and apprehended, and condemned; he hears still, but yet can find no peace. Why? Because he lives in those sins that he is convinced of. Hence the word raiseth damps and heart qualms, that he has no peace, but is ever pulled from his own bottom and hypocrisy, and the word discovers more sins, and has no peace. The word will not give nor offer Christ and a base lust together, nor will not suffer any to have them both in peace. Hereupon the soul, finding no rest nor peace, (which the false heart seeks for chiefly,) flies from the light, especially if it has found out a shorter cut to its peace, by any device or golden delusions of men. And now they will hear no more, and the publishers of God's truth are tyrannical tormentors of the consciences of them that be weak, false prophets that lead them out of the way of peace. And because of this, they think they were led out of the way of truth, because out of the way of peace. Or, if they do come, they can sit with disdain and contempt of men, (alas! they speak according to their light,) and of all the truths of God, which shall one day be preached over again in flames of fire, to their eternal

horror. Rev. vi. 2, it is said, "Christ rides on a white horse, conquering and to conquer." Men have unruly hearts, and strong hearts, and they will not die, not yield presently. And hence, when one sin is cast away, another steps into the room of it; and when that is gone, another supplies the place of it, and commonly the strongest sin and temptation is the last. Now, hence Christ goes on, rides on in the chariot of the word, conquering and to conquer still. Those that do yield, he saves; those that will not, he slays. Now, these poor creatures have had Christ's arrows in them, and are wounded for some sin, but the Lord discovers more still; hence, at last, they fly away with the arrows in their hearts for ease. O, poor creatures, know it, the Lord Jesus will find you out. You will not be conquered by him, you shall never be saved by him. You have light, you shall have delusions, endless, unknown hypocrisy and darkness to be your portion. There is never a plain heart, but he accounts that wound and trouble greatest mercy, and blesseth the Lord that he will not give him his sins and peace with them too.

2. Those that fly not from the light of the truth, but give it the hearing, but yet let it slip; either not minding it then, or not pondering it afterward; that before they come thirst not for more light, look not up for it, nor are mourning when the Lord hides it from their eyes. Some there be that be such all-sufficient men, so good they need be no better, so wise that they need no more; some insufficient, indeed, to know, and hence ever learning, hearing, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. If light breaks not in, they can lie in darkness still, and not mourn, and think no more of it than a tale that is told, or news that is brought. O, look to your standing; for you are in the high road to hypocrisy, and it is impossible you should be kept from it that lie so; (John xii. 35,) "Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you." Satan knew if light came in Christ would come in. And, therefore, know it, all that time thou hast heard and heard, but not with divine light, hast got only somewhat to prate on now, to be of another opinion now from what thou wast. O, now, Satan has been let loose, by the dreadful vengeance of Almighty God, to blind thee, that so thou mightst die in thy hypocrisy and sin. O, poor captives, mourn under this, and behold your danger for time to come.

Use 2. Hence see the reason why many that have had mighty strong affections at first conversion afterward become dry, and wither, and consume, and pine, and die away, and now their hypocrisy is manifest, if not to all the world by open profaneness, yet to the discerning eye of living Christians, by a formal,

barren, unsavory, unfruitful heart and course, because they never had light to conviction as yet. You shall have some ignorant creatures, awakened by some thundering ministry, weep and mourn for sin, and after vanish into smoke, being never convinced of sin. Land floods of sorrow, without a spring of light, are dried up, and make the heart more fruitful in sin afterward. Many go under fears of wrath, and never get peace, because never convinced of wrath. Many are affected with Christ, and with joy of the gospel, as the stony ground; but they, wanting depth of earth, of conviction, die away again; and hence all the world can never stop a Christian in his shining profession, no more than they can the sun in his course, as Paul, (2 Cor. v. 11,) "We, knowing the terror of the Lord, persuade men." And hence Moses (Heb. xi. 27) feared no frowns of Pharaoh, cared for no honors from Pharaoh; he saw the God that was invincible, and hence Christ prays for his disciples to be kept from evil. "The world has not known me, but these have known me." John xvii. When men are condemned to die, they take on, because now they see death; but here, in time of health, they see it not. If men wrong a child, their heart smites them and grieves; but the Lord is abased, dishonored, and men are not affected, because they want light, and see it not. If men be to match with a prince, or stand before him, it is counted blessedness; but before Christ it is a burden, because men know it not. It is strange to see some people carried with mighty affection against sin and hell, and after Christ. And what is hell you fear? A dreadful place. What is Christ? They scarce know so much as devils do; but that is all. O, trust them not. Many have, and these will all, away to some lust, or opinion, or pride, or world, and the reason is, they never had light enough. John v. 35. "John was a burning and shining light, and they did joy in him for a season;" yet, as glorious as it was, they saw not Christ by it, especially not with divine light. It is rare to see Christians full both of light and affection. And, therefore, consider of this, many a man has been well brought up, and is of a sweet, loving nature, mild, and gentle, and harmless, likes and loves the best things, and his meaning, and mind, and heart is good, and has more in heart than in show, and so hopes all shall go well with him. I say there may lie greatest hypocrisy under greatest affections, especially if they want light. You shall be hardened in your hypocrisy by them. I never liked violent affections and pangs, but only such as were dropped in by light; because those come from an external principle, and last not, but these do. Men are not affrighted by the light of the sun, though clearer than the lightning.

Use 3. Hence take heed of contenting yourselves with every kind of knowledge. Do not worship every image in your own heads, especially you that fall short of truth, or the knowledge of it; for when you have some, there may be yet that wanting which may make you sincere. There are many men of great knowledge, able to teach themselves and others too, and yet their hearts are unsound. How comes this to pass? Is it because they have so much light? No, but because they want much; and therefore content not yourselves with every knowledge. There is some knowledge which men have by the light of nature (which leaves them without excuse) from the book of creation, some by power of education, some by the light of the law, whereby men may know their sin and evils; some by the letter of the gospel, and so men may know much and speak well, and so "in seeing see not;" some by the Spirit, and may see much, so as to prophesy in Christ's name, and yet be bid depart. Matt. vii. Now, there is a light of glory, whereby the elect see things in another manner; to tell you how, they can not; it is the beginning of light in heaven, and the same Spirit that fills Christ filling their minds, that they know by this anointing all things, which if ever you have, you must become babes and fools in your own eyes. God will never write his law in your minds till all the scribblings of it are blotted out. Account all your knowledge loss for the gaining of this. / It is sad to see many a man pleasing himself in his own dreaming delusions, yet the poor creature in seeing sees not, which is God's heavy curse upon men under greatest means, and which lays all waste and desolate; (Is. vi.) "How long? until all be waste." Ver. 11.

Use 4. Hence see the right way of living a life of truth, of "being an Israelite in whom is no guile." Keep light in your minds, and you will keep truth alive in your hearts and lives. Many a sincere heart may have hypocrisy and much unsoundness in him, though he be no hypocrite. But how comes it so to be? And whence so little truth? and hence so many fears and doubts about their estates continually? O, men lose that glorious light that sometimes they have. For when you have it in an ordinance, O, how sweet is the Lord and all his ways to you! Afterward you have lost your hearts, truly it is because you have lost your light.

Two ways hypocrisy vents itself, which God's people oppose.

1. In secret withdrawing of the heart to sin. O, now get light; for sin never draws away, but by appearance of some good at least, *pro hic et nunc*. James i. 14, Now put off the covering, keep the mind from being deceived, you will keep the heart from being hardened, deadened, and withdrawn from God.

2. In performing duties, but not for Christ as their utmost end; now, the heart is bent this way, yet it fails, because light is gone, to see and behold the glory and blessedness of this. Men that have honor or gain in their eye are carried violently after it. Men that are bound for a voyage will go through, their eye leads them. Stephen speaks till the stones were about his ears. "I see Jesus," saith he, "at the right hand of God." 2 Cor. xv. 58, "Be abundant in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor is not in vain." Hence David (Ps. cxix.) begs for knowledge of this and that, and then he will do it. O, therefore, keep it in your minds as precious; (Prov. ii. 10,) "If knowledge be pleasant," etc. And pray to God to keep it for you. Light is in the sun, and not ceased to this day; so if the Lord would put in this light, and be the perpetual fountain thereof to you, it would abide, etc. "Thy word I have hid in my heart," etc. Ps. cxix.

Section IV.

Hence learn the cure of hypocrisy, viz.: remove the cause, which is folly, and if you would be sincere, O, prize and beg for more light, and love it, and you shall then, after you have digged for it, find it. Would it not be sad to be led blindfold like them till they were in the midst of Samaria, so till in the midst of hell? Would it not be sad to be like Sodomites, groping for the door, especially you that are come over to this country for more of the knowledge of Christ? O, then, beloved, take heed you bury not your minds in the earth, lose not your thoughts in the dung. And you must stand one day before God, when the book of the secrets of your hearts shall be opened, when if found too light, then would it not be a doleful parting to lose the Lord Jesus after such light and affections, for want of a little more light? O, look to yourselves now.

Means 1. Stick close to the guidance of the Scriptures, and love them. Moses saith, "Then other nations shall say, What people so wise?" Deut. iv. 6. And these make "the men of God (2 Tim. iii. 15) full of God's Spirit, wise unto salvation;" and for neglect of this, the Lord gave, and does give men up to strong delusions, that they believe lies, viz., "because they loved not the truth." Never a truth but is unsealed by blood, and revealed to be the infinite wisdom of the Father, and love to poor lost men, where God opens all his heart; if men will despise these, it is a pity but they should be blinded. Do not scoff at those that know the Lord here; they are Scripture-learned men; if not, never Spirit-learned. Take this for your counselor, in all

your doubts and fears it will teach you. A man gets an opinion, or falls in love with a sinful corruption; both deceive him. Why so? Is there no word against it? O, yes, but they will not hear it, but make God and Scripture bow down to them; they will not be led by it. O, entreat the Lord to keep thee from that.

Means 2. Be abundant in meditation daily. Ps. cxix. 99. It is a hundred to one else if not miserably deluded. And as the Spirit convinceth first of sin, righteousness, and judgment, so let your thoughts be. This makes a man see far and see much.

Means 3. Practice what you know, and taste the sweetness of it there. Ps. cxix. 100. And then the heart will grow savingly full of divine light. Nothing makes men foolish but this. "O, taste and see." O, if men knew the sweet of this way of truth, they would ever walk in it, and bring others to submit to it. "Shall I hide from Abraham that which he will teach his family?" Gen. xviii. 17, 19.

Means 4. Cast up your eyes to Christ glorified, being full of the Spirit for thee, and beg of him, as if he were with thee, to send it down. As Solomon asked this. See John vii. 39.

Use 6. O, learn to be exceeding thankful for any saving light the Lord has kindled in you, if ever it has been powerful to discover and remove the hidden hypocrisy of thy heart, that now the Lord has made thee plain and serious for him, that it is death not to live, heaven for to live unto him. O, then bless the Lord for that means that did it for thee; thou mightst have perished in thy own delusions and dreams. Time was when thou wast deceived; now the Lord has made thy eyes brighter than the sun, to see such things as are hid from great ones in the world. O, though it be but a little, yet if real and saving light, bless him. A man that has been in midst of sands, and without a pilot, afterward looks back, and saith, There I might have split. O, this is wonderful to him! O, Christ did thus! "I thank thee thou hast hid," etc. Matt. xi. 25. The Lord has hid them from heads and hearts of many wise and prudent, and ever they shall be hid, and, *e contra*, revealed them to thee, a babe, a weak one, a poor ignorant one; (Matt. xvi. 17,) "Flesh and blood has not revealed it," so as to build here on this righteousness, to bring all light and life from Christ, and cleave alone to him. O, remember you are called "out of darkness into marvelous light to show forth his virtues." What canst thou desire more than eternal life? And this is it. 1 John v. 20; John xvii. 30.

CHAPTER XVII.

THAT HYPOCRITES DISCOVER THEMSELVES IN AN INEFFECTUAL USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE

Secondly. *The difference between the wise and foolish Virgins is set down more particularly*, ver. 3, 4.

Section I.

This particular difference is declared by the different practice of the foolish and wise virgins each from other.

1. That the foolish, though they had so much wisdom, like the wise, as to take lamps, yet so much folly was bound up in their heart, as that "they took no oil in their vessels for their lamps."

2. That the wise did not only light their lamps, but they did also fill their vessels with oil, that either their lamp might never go out, or, if it did, it might be soon kindled again. More plainly: the foolish contented themselves with the name and blaze of outward profession, kindled from some inward, yet lighter and more superficial strokes of God's Spirit, neglecting the work within. But the wise did not only carry their lamps of outward profession, but they filled their vessels, and got an inward principle of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus to maintain their profession before men, and their uprightness before the Lord. So that, methinks, here is a double difference; the first is implied, the second plainly expressed.

1. That which is implied is this, that the foolish made choice of a good end, viz., to meet Christ; but it was with an ineffectual use of means to that end; their lamps were to light and lead them to Christ. These lights might blaze for a time, but they would consume without oil. They neglect that; the wise were better instructed than so.

2. The foolish glory in an outward profession, as also in some superficial affection, without an inward principle of the gracious presence of the eternal anointing and Spirit in them; but the wise have it, and are carried to glory by it. And more, at this time, of the lamps and vessels I shall not speak.

Doct. 1. That the closest hypocrites of virgin churches discover themselves (at least before the Lord) in an effectual use of those means that do conduce toward their desired and expected end.

The bridegroom is here looked for; the presence of Jesus is

longed for; he comes in the night; they must meet him in the night. Now, means they use, lamps they take, and so much oil as kindles their lamps; but oil they take not in their vessels, the only means to preserve their lamps from going out, that so they may meet the Lord, and not be shut out from the Lord, as at last these careless virgins were. Search the churches for the present, search the records of past ages; many have desired and looked for the Lord, and yet have lost the Lord, their end. Why so? They never had hearts effectually to use and improve the means to that end, either outward or inward. Look upon men out of the church; they perish because they have no remedy, they have no lamps to light, they have no bread to eat, no means to help. But why do those within the church perish? Is it because there is no remedy? No; but because they do not use the remedy. Is it because they want means? No; but because they do not effectually improve means. Here they fall short, herein they discover themselves. Look but upon this next parable of the talents, verse 25. One of them was cast off and cast out. Why? Because he had no talent? No; but because he had no mind nor list to use his talent; he did not make his gain out of it to attain his end. All ordinances of God, and all that time we have under them, are talents. Now, wherein do hypocrites fail? There is a secret gain of ordinances which hypocrites regard not, and hence the best hypocrite lives in debt, and dies a beggar. For, (Prov. xvi. 17,) "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool, but no heart to use it?" Precious liberties, ordinances that many have desired to see and have not seen them. Why does the Lord betrust him with such as use them not? O, he has them; but here is his wound, he has no heart to use them. Look throughout all the word, why have many set a great price on Christ and yet have lost him? Because, like higgling chapmen, they have had a desire to the commodity; but they have been loth to be at the cost to use the means for it. The gospel brings Christ and immortality to light, and this serpent is lifted up, this lamb slain before men's eyes, and this bread put to men's lips and mouths. Why are not all possessed of him, blessed in him? The Lord saith, "Come, and the Spirit saith come, and the bride saith come." Why, the reason is, men will not use the means for him. Is. lv. 2–4. Men will lay out their money, though it be for "that which is not bread." Jer. ii. 5–8, "I brought them through pits into a pleasant land, to eat the goodness thereof." And, doubtless, he brought not a herd of swine into Canaan, only to enjoy the outward blessings and swill of Canaan, but to enjoy the good of

his temple, ordinances, etc. But where was their wound? "Neither priests nor people said, Where is the Lord?" i. e., where is the Lord in these ways, that we can come at last to the full enjoyment of him by these? This they neglected. Methinks it is with the best hypocrites as it was with divers merchants; they prize and desire the gain of merchandise, but to be at the trouble to prepare the ship, to put themselves upon hazards and dangers of the ship, to go and fetch the treasure that they prize, this they will never do. So many prize and desire earnestly the treasures of heaven; here is their end, but to be at the trouble of a heaven voyage, to bring this treasure to "pass through the valley of Beca," tears, temptations, the powers of darkness, the breaches, oppositions, and contradictions of a sinful, unbelieving heart, good and evil report, to pass from one depth and wave to another, this the best hypocrite fails in, and hence loses all at last. And this I conceive to be one of the great differences between the strong desires and esteems of hypocrites and saints.

Section II.

Reason 1. In regard of God; because this neglect is one of the great means by which he does execute his eternal rejection of men, and hence here they ever do fail. For, first, the Lord has chosen some to life — the end.

2. He chooseth certain means to lead to this end.

3. He purposeth to carry all his elect by these means to that end; themselves can not, hence the Lord doth. And hence ariseth the great peace and support of the saints, when they look upon the everlasting mountains of hinderances and impossibilities in their way, the Lord has undertaken to carry them through them. John xvii. 15. That, when heart and strength fails, he will be heart and strength, and guide by his counsel and bring to his glory. And hence, as all the elect are to be certainly carried through all means to their end, and this is proper to them, so hence the best hypocrite, being never appointed certainly to come to this end, ever fails in the use of means; there he is and shall be forsaken of God, and forsake God. Hence John vi. When many used the means, and followed Christ for a time, that they might have life, at last they forsook Christ and means to have him. Why? Ver. 65. Because "none can come to me, except it were given him of the Father." Hence, look, as certainly as the degree of reprobation shall stand, he having not appointed them, to the end; so he never carries them through all means to that end, and, therefore, here they do ever fail. As it is

in a family, those that the lord of the family intends to give his estate unto, he keeps a strict eye upon them, keeps them under the government of the family; as for others, let them go where they will, and do what they will. So here all that shall enjoy God are put under the kingdom of the Son. Hence he is said to be given up. To others he will say, You love liberty; take it, then.

Reason 2. Because the Lord and fellowship with him is never, indeed, their last and utmost end, or their only end; but they have some other end of their own, and hence they are never carried strongly through all means to that end. For this is the nature of a man's last and utmost end, it carries a man without any stop toward it, and that with delight. As a man that has honor, and preferment, and great hopes in his eye, that is reaching to the top of his aspiring thoughts, he will ride, and run, and flatter, and sin, etc. A man that has riches in his eye, he will rise early, and go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness, and he never has enough. A man that is sick, and has health in his eye, takes his physic, observes his seasons, wastes his estate, for this is his end. Hence a hypocrite, never making Christ his last end, but being ever "a double-minded man," (James i.,) and having his own ends, and lusts, and self to attend upon, hence the bias draws him from following Christ effectually; but he must follow his own ends, and hence ever neglects the means that lead him thereunto. Matt. vi. 24. Look, as it is with men that have two trades or two shops; one is as much as ever they can follow or tend; they are forced at last to put off one, and they must neglect the one; so here.

3. In regard of that spirit of sloth and slumber which the Lord ever leaves the best hypocrite unto, which is the dearest lust and last enemy that the Lord destroys in all his, but never destroys in these. Which so mightily oppresseth all their senses, that they can not use effectually all means to accomplish their ends. And hence a man desires the end, but has it not. Prov. xiii. 4. The Lord proposeth the most glorious end to his people, but it is through many difficulties that we must come to it. Now, there being the spirit of sloth within and these difficulties without, a hypocrite sits down and rests under the shadow of this growing, spreading sin, and saith it is hard; and because he can not do so, he hopes it is but an infirmity, and God will accept of his desires, and here perisheth. Matt. vii. 14, "For strait is the gate that leads unto life, hence few there be that find it." Look, as it was with the Israelites, Canaan they were bound for; they came at last to it; but when their spies had told them of

the difficulties, they sank, only Caleb and Joshua of that mighty host that had upright hearts here. Heavy things must descend, though cast up; for their place is downward. Light things, cast them downward, yet they must up again; for their place is upward. So it is here. Sluggish hearts may be lift up by means, but they can not hold it; their place is downward, here is their rest. So saints, *e contra*, like fire, will consume all difficulties; their rest is upward.

Section III.

Use 1. Hence we see one ground of many complaints that are in the mouths of many professors of the ways of God, that never find the sweet which is the end of their Christian course; that are ever complaining of wants, but never feel supplies; ever learning, never triumphing over their sins; ever wishing that they had the Lord, but never possessing the Lord. And hence have minds full of fears, and mouths full of complaints, and hence, finding no sweet in their course, could be content, but for shame, to throw by their profession. Why, where is the cause of this? Is heaven so barren and beggarly, that there are no jewels to be had there? Are the fields of God's ordinances so empty, that there is no treasure to be found there? O, yes; there it is, but Christians are idle; there is the treasure, but they can not beg, much less dig for it. Prov. ii. 3–6. If there be a treasure in the ground, and a man can find nothing, and so is ever complaining, the fault is in the man, he does not dig long enough, nor deep enough; so it is here. There is never an ordinance, but the Lord is in it; "he never said to the house of Jacob seek his face in vain." Men pray, and if a few sighs will bring in relief, well and good; if not, they cast that shovel by, dig I can not; they spend some time in laying sin to heart, but if I can not presently feel the bitterness of it, I can not help it, dig I can not. A man may be content to hear the word, and to listen after it; but to stir up the soul to lay hold on the Lord, that their sleep forbids. Prov. xiii. 4, "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Why do you famish under means? is it because the Lord is unwilling or unable to relieve? No; (John vi. 27,) "You labor for the bread that perishes." Labor not for it, but for the other, and the Son of man will give it you; for he is sealed for that very end. You complain your hearts are always out of frame. Tell me, do you keep them with all diligence? Prov. iv. 23. With all your guard about? You complain you never get assurance. Do you use all diligence to make it sure? You complain you seek, and find not. Do you

seek him diligently? Heb. xi. 6. O, this is the cause. "The Lord has given you the spirit of slumber." O, lay not the fault on the Lord, but on thine own careless heart, and lament over it, and say, This has been the cause of all my complaints and woe. O, I remember what the Lord, by Jeremy, speaks, "Go into the strongholds; for the Lord has poured upon us the spirit of deep sleep, and given us the waters of gall to drink." I confess the Lord's choicest servants have their complaints, their sighs and groans unutterable; they have their fears, temptations, and tears; who more abundantly? Yet, beloved, methinks it is with them as it is with passengers and travelers toward their home, that they see it twenty miles off sometime, when they be on the top of a hill. After they have gone a little farther, they come into a valley, and then they complain they have lost the sight of it, and can not see it again scarce till they be upon it; yet they sit not down in their valley, but are going toward it. "They go from strength to strength," though they come tired thither; as Ps. lxxiv. 7, 8. "They pass from strength to strength, till they come to see God in Sion." They rest not in their complaints, but get on; and the star before them, the means that lead them to that end, make them (as Matt. ii. 10) "rejoice with exceeding great joy." I confess they may for a time give way to their sloth, and sit in their valleys, and turn day into night, and sleep out almost the season of means; yet you shall ever find this, if ordinary means awaken them not, terrible flashings and lightnings of wrath do; and in their afflictions, and terrors, and wounds of conscience, (Hos. v. 15,) "They shall seek the Lord early." Ponder, therefore, of this cause, and in a time of sorrow they shall complain for something, viz., their sloth. This may be the greatest sin of some, they live in no sin but complaint; thy complaints may be fruits of sloth in not using means, and this may be thy great sin.

Use 2. Hence learn, it is not having of means in this place, nor coming hither for means, that will do you any good, or evidence your safe and good estate, but an effectual use and improvement of them; not only the use of outward, but inward means too. Men that have never so great a stock may die beggars, by not improving it. Deut. xxix. 3, 4.

1. Many, seeing and beholding that sun which is set with them to be risen here in these western parts, — partly out of fear of persecution, partly by friends' persuasion and company, partly to enjoy God in ordinances, — have taken their flight hither.

But, 2. Being come, wish, O that our eyes had never seen it! partly through plenty of means, despise and loathe them; partly

through multitude of coveting or vexing cares, have no hearts to, or time to use them.

And yet, 3. Are comforted in this that they have them, though they see no God in them, taste little sweetness, receive little power from them, and hope to go to heaven at next remove, that have come so far for these, etc. I would to God it were so. But, O, consider, —

1. If you improve them not, thy coming hither is but the discovery of thy hypocrisy to men and angels; for this is the stage wherein the most fine-spun hypocrisy and real sincerity shall act its part.

2. Nay, thou art so far from being blessed in having them thus, that God's fiercest plagues shall here approach thy dwelling. The ark among the Philistines made the Lord plague the Philistines.

3. Nay, this shall lay all desolate one day. They cried, "The temple of the Lord." Jer. vii. "Go to Shiloh." So I say, go to the Palatinate, go to Germany, France, go to the places whence you came, and "see what the Lord has done."

4. This shall be, as to saints, greatest joy, when they shall look back, and see all the difficulties they have passed over, that here and there hearts and help failed, and there I lingered; but the Lord was merciful, and pulled me out. And they shall wonder at that faithfulness and grace. So here, this will be terror and anguish, that I came so far, and had means, and took some pains, and was almost persuaded one time, almost confuted another, almost conquered and had yielded up all at another; but, O, my lump fell down to the dust again, and my soul forsook the pursuing of the Lord again; and this shall be the portion of hypocrites. You may neglect and wrap up your talents, but the Lord has a time to call you to an account what gain you make. Look, therefore, to it, it may be some of you have need to improve means; you despise them in one place, and hither you come for them, and poor hearts, eyes dim, hearts hard, consciences asleep, ears deaf, breath gone, life lost, God departed, and nothing left but a dead carcass. It may be some are sincere, and the work of God's Spirit is set back, your lamps are out, your watchful minds, and tender hearts, and earnest pursuit after the Lord is gone. O, then, consider what little cause you have to boast in means. Men that have no part in ships look for no gain; but if you have any part in the blessing of ordinances, rest not without it.

Use 3. Hence see what need you have of a mighty and unresistible power of the Lord's grace and Spirit, to carry you to

an end in your Christian course, if ever you come to life. For if hypocrisy discovers itself in an ineffectual use of means, then you will find all the powers of darkness resisting and seeking to surprise you here. That as it is with thieves, you shall not see nor find them lying in the city, it is in vain there to offer any violence, but in the way; so Satan can not step unto the gates of heaven, to keep you from thence, and hence all his power and policy lies in the way of means, to keep you from thence. And hence look upon the best man, how many hinderances to prayer sometimes; though he has tasted the sweet of it, he had rather die than pray. How soon are the thoughts turned from God! When we come to draw nigh to God, how unable to wake one hour! That if it were not the invincible strength of a God that did support them (1 Pet. i. 5) they could never go on. Tell me, you poor creatures, that never were effectually carried to your end by means, do you not oft find checks for sin, desires against it, Christ and mercy weeping at your knees, melting over you, and your hearts almost persuaded? Do you not find a want of Christ, and grace, and Spirit, and promises, and you hope it will be better? Do you not find some movings toward the Lord, but yet withal do you not find a dead, slothful heart, slays you again? The veriest reprobate in the world may have as good an assurance of heaven as thou; there may be in hell that once appeared better than thee. And who can mend this? long, long it has been thus. O, then feel a need of the Lord's irresistible power. Thou indeed hast an end; but say, Lord, thou must carry me like a lost sheep on thy shoulders to that end! "Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face evermore;" in all means, at all times, but seek his strength then; (Col. i. 29,) "I labor thus, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily;" and so I strive. O, see need of this. Many of you make work with your own hearts, and strive, and endeavor, and yet can not stir. O, look then for this mighty working, and feel a need of it.

Section IV.

Use 4. *Of Trial.* Hence judge what your states are this day before the Lord. I know and believe that you prize, pray for, long for the end, and if ever the Lord saves and pardons you, you shall have cause to bless him. You may do as has been said, but never find a heart given you by the invincible wrestlings of a God to use and improve all means to that end; and thus your practice in the habitual neglect of means is a clear and manifest witness, like the day, against you, that you do not

desire sincerely the end (as you think) in having so little respect to the means that conduce thereunto. Did you ever see that man that did indeed desire life, but he would use all means, wits, and friends; nay, cut off his limbs to preserve it? But, however, put that name upon it, say you do desire and prize the end, yet if the Lord leaves you, or you forsake the Lord in a neglect of means that lead thereto, and that effectually; what you may be, and what the Lord may do, I know not, but to this day your estate is no better than a painted salvation and pictured hypocrisy before the Lord. That stone at which the closest hypocrites have stumbled, that rock on which the best hypocrite has been broken, thou art fallen upon that enemy of sloth which has carried kings (men that have worn the crown of profession in the world) miserable captives (notwithstanding their lamentable cries, Lord, save us!) to hell; the same enemy has already bound thee up in chains, and what will become of thee, it is only known in his breast, that by the voice of his trump can awaken the dead, and break the bonds of sloth and death itself. But you will say, there are no virgins among us that neglect to take their oil, that so far forget themselves as to neglect the means, that are come so many thousand miles for means; there is not a day but some line is drawn, not a sermon, Sabbath, but some good got, or else they think themselves half undone, not a prayer but one step nearer to glory; the day is not long enough, and therefore the nights are spent in wrestlings with the angel; nay, in prevailing with God for themselves and churches, and blessing on both; Sabbaths are the daybreaks of heaven, the fellowship of saints better than to stand before kings; the fellowship of Christ in heaven so sweet, that in seeking of him men forget themselves, nay, to eat their bread; that if the Lord should have let out the vineyard of ordinances to any husbandmen in the world, who could or would have taken more pains to dig it, to dress it, than we do? Beloved, those enlargements that are in any after the Lord, the Lord cherish and increase them; but I fear we may go five times about the tree before we see such laden boughs. I am much mistaken if the best may not be discovered here; the fairest flowers in the field must wither, they can not last, and the best affections that are but temporary, that have acted men mightily for a time in the use of means, must perish in the neglect of means at last. I shall not, therefore, meddle with profane or carnal gospelers, so much as with close deceivers of their own souls; and look, as it is in all sores, you may know where the sore is by the lappings, so you may know a sluggard that neglects means by his shifts. For, if you observe, no sin has so

many shifts and colors for it as this. Saul, when he had not gone through-stitch with the Lord's work in slaying the Amalekites, what ado had Samuel to convince him! He tells a lie, lays the blame on the people, propounds the good end and affection he had. So here, thus it is with many, as, viz., —

1. Those that live in a secret neglect of means, and yet hope to come to their end, because of their desires. We shall find the Scripture gives us two sorts of desires. 1. Of the righteous. 2. Of the sluggard. 1. "The desires of the righteous," (Prov. x. 24,) "shall be granted," being breathings of God's eternal Spirit, not a sigh or groan unanswered. 2. Of the sluggard; (Prov. xxi. 15,) "The desire of the slothful kills him, for his hands refuse to labor;" the desires of the righteous are ever spurs to quicken them up in the use of means mightily; the desires of the sluggard bridle him up, they bind his hands, and fetter his feet, that he can not but neglect means. Some desires there be that arise from the need of a good, and here will not only be desires, but all means used, as in point of famine; some only from want of a good, and here a man usually contents himself with bare desires, never has a heart to use the means mightily for that end. Many a one is convinced his state is miserable, and fears it, and Baalam-like sees the blessedness of the people of God, and knows he wants pardon, and life, and peace, and promises, and Christ, and desires it: O that I might die their death! O that I might live and drink that water, that I might thirst no more! O that my sins were pardoned! O that my heart was humbled! But what if the Lord grant them no peace nor pardon? Do they make earnest inquiry after the Lord Christ, with restless pursuits and groans because they need it? is it worth that? O, no; but yet they hope God will be so merciful as to accept their desires; and so they rest, and live and die in that rest. O, poor creatures, your desires kill you; as a man is undone with slothful servants that can not earn their own, much less get their master's bread. And many in hell say, I had thought my desires would have carried me to glory, but now I see they have been slothful, and here I must perish and famish forever. Had I known of this, I would rather have wept out my eyes, and filled the world with my sorrowful complaints. My meditations of the Lord should have been at midnight. I would have deceived my eyes of sleep at night, and deprived myself of bread at day, and lost my limbs, had I but known that by contenting myself with these desires, I should have lost my life. Here many Christians are falsely bottomed; they are troubled about their estate; come to some or other and profess their

desires are after Christ and grace, etc., and then comforted (as in sinking fits a man snatcheth at any flag or twig) with them desires, before they have followed the Lord in the use of all means to get the thing they desire. And here is the first beginning of the Lord's forsaking of them, and theirs of the Lord, and he is left alone only with his desires, that if any duty be neglected, desires comfort him; if grace resisted, desires quiet him; if sin keeping him captive, desires fill him. Luke xiii. 24. And so like a bird that lies in the nest, but its wings never grow, there it perisheth. I know saints may comfort themselves with desires before the things be given, because promised, but you shall see an endless reach in them in the use of all means. Phil. iii. 13. Others think their neglect of means to be but an infirmity, and that their desires will serve, and hence abuse that Scripture, Rom. vii.

2. They that neglect the means, and yet hope to come to their end, because of worldly clogs and incumbrances here; for this is the very spirit of many a man. If God keeps the house from being burnt, and family from being sick, it may be family prayer is neglected; if not that, yet secret is omitted; if not that, yet meditation; a man can get no head, nor heart, nor time for it. If any good is got, it is lost again. Sabbaths spent and no good gained. A man knows his soul lies waste and common without any fence or watch, and that he would not let his fields as he doth his heart, overgrown with cares, and lusts, and vain thought. Now, many a man, though he doth dislike this, yet lives in this. Why? Is this your home? Are these things your portion? No; but yet thinks he may with a safe conscience continue thus, and God forgive him too. Why, the family is great, children increase upon me, (and they are so busy and long a dressing on the Lord's day, that sermon is out before they come,) and we are not called to book it all day as ministers can, and worldly employments are so many, and the best are entangled here; and they think this is an excuse. Luke xiv. 18, 19. Nay, many a one, convinced of this, yet lives in this against the light of conviction, hoping that one day the stream of worldly occasions will be run by. I confess, as the Lord has given us his ordinances to seek him in, so he has appointed our callings to walk with him in. Adam in paradise must not be idle, but look to the garden; and in this land those that will be good husbands for God (lest they discredit their profession by bringing themselves to a piece of bread) must be good husbands for themselves. But here is that which stings, when to worldly employments men are servants, not lords of them. When men do not

make their occasions bow down to them, and serve them, that they may serve and seek a god; but they bow down their knees, nay, basely, their backs, under the feet of any mean employment that must be followed with neglect of God. Do not say, Who is not entangled here? I tell you, if Christ's prayer can prevail, some are not; (John xvii. 15,) "I pray not that thou wouldst take them out of the world, but keep them from the evil." If blood can prevail, it does. Gal. i. 4. O, look to this; it may be some of you do not only neglect the Lord, all dies again; O, it is the world; know your estates by this.

3. Those that depart from God in the neglect of means, because they find no good, and do not feel themselves a whit the better for them; they neglect this trade, because they find it a gainless trade; for thus God executes his eternal rejection upon many a soul. As it is with Saul, it was one of the last vials God poured out upon him; (1 Sam. xxviii. 5, 6, 15,) saith he, "I am sore distressed, and the Lord answers me not by Urim nor Thummim, and therefore am I come to thee;" let a devil comfort me if God will not. So many a soul, having committed some sin that lies glowing on the conscience, is sore troubled, and first it goes to the Lord, and the Lord answers not, there is silence in heaven, and all means, but the noise of fears within; now, at last, the soul does not forsake the Lord for Satan plainly, but what means can comfort them that they seek for, and in time a man is weary of waiting at God's gates, and hence a form of duties, and prayers, and custom of devotion is kept to quiet the conscience; but they are not restless for the gain of them, for the Lord in them; they think that it is in vain, to no profit, as those in Mal. iii. 14, to walk mournfully. Jonah was cast out of God's sight, yet through "the belly of a whale he would look toward the temple." So it is with the people of God; though they sometimes conclude thus, and think not to seek any more, yet their hearts have tasted the good, their faith believes there is that hid in the Lord in his temple that it never saw yet; hence they look still. What made the man (Matt. xxv.) hide his talent in the earth? I thought thou wast a hard master, and lookedst for so much gain, and I could not get it, and hence he hid his talent. Hence men keep the means without use of the means, and some that have for a time been used to do so keep it as their custom, without making any such work of it as to gain the end of the means.

4. Those that do neglect the Lord in means by an effectual pursuit of them, because of some sips and taste of some good in them; and so methinks it is in this case as it is in some countries,

where, if a man comes to their houses in the afternoon, and both have a mind to part, yet loth to part without showing some kindness, and the other without tasting of it, they lay their voiding napkin, and finding that refreshing there they are content to lose their supper. So it is here; a man comes weary to the Lord's house, to his ordinances; the Lord will not let him go without some expression of kindness, nor they depart willingly from the Lord without it, and hence the Lord gives them light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, peace out of trouble, a taste of his sweetness after tastes of sin's bitterness, and then they take their leave, as they. Heb. vi. 2–5. And here the Lord leaves many a poor creature, (Deut. xxix. 2–4;) they did see something and taste something, and there they rested. O, but the Lord gives them not eyes to see, etc. For no hypocrite living is fully emptied of his lusts, but has somewhat to fill him; but some emptiness he may have, hence may have some desires after the Lord, and hence it is not the fullness of God only that satisfies him, but some tastes of God's kindness, and small things do and must fill him. His lusts fill him in part, and something of God is wanting, and that some little matter doth make up. Hence, when this is done, means is neglected fearfully, a man's heart is hardened and ignorant, a little light and sorrow stays him, as the stony ground, though there be a stone at bottom; a man is full of doubts, and a little hope which frees him from fears quiets him, hence he never conquers unbelief. A man has lived a loose course, a little resolution of heart stays him, though the heart will depart again, as those, Deut. v. 27, 29. The Lord has but little of their hearts, and the Lord shows them but little of his. And hence this is usual to see a false heart most diligent in seeking the Lord when he has been worst, and most careless when it is best. Hence many at first conversion sought the Lord earnestly, afterward affections and endeavors die, that now they are as good as the word can make them! Hence the Lord, when in mercy he deals with men, keeps them long fasting, till the time of extremity comes, and then he pours waters on the thirsty. Hence better for those never to have known. 2 Pet. ii. 21. And a hypocrite's last end is to satisfy himself, hence he has enough; a saint's is to satisfy Christ, hence he never has enough.

5. Those that do neglect the Lord under this color of receiving Christ; they can do nothing themselves, and Christ must do all; and hence neglect the Lord secretly, and sometimes quarrel with the ministry privately, when pressed to a duty or to believe. Alas! what can a man do, when all the ministers in the world have preached their hearts out? At last they must bring us to

Christ. What else should the apostle mean, (Rom. iv. 5,) "Not to him that worketh, but believeth, is faith accounted for righteousness. I must not live, I must let Christ live," etc.? And hence, say they, the cause of perishing is not men's wills, but God's. He elects not; he gives no heart. Such hypocrites the Lord prophesies of; (Matt. vii. 21,) "Many that say to me, Lord, Lord;" i. e., that advance the Lord Jesus, and live in neglect of all duties, and bring the Lord of glory, not from his throne in heaven to hell, but, which is worse, debase him from his glory to sin, to be the cover of sin, and protector of it. Beloved, I know no surer sign of a vessel that God intends to break in pieces than this, to live in this neglect. 2 Tim. ii. 20. Nay, it is an evidence there is no hope, no living hope; (1 John iii. 3,) "He that has this hope purgeth himself as. Christ is pure." Many, it seems, boasted of hope in Christ; so do saints, but he gives this note, he purgeth himself, he will not sluggishly put all on Christ. It is true, it is the mighty working of Christ that must conquer thy lusts; but must this put you to neglect striving? (Col. i. 29,) "I strive according to the working." And, for my part, though I will not dispute the point at large, I believe there is a constant assistance of the mighty power of the Lord Jesus in the souls of all the saints. 1 Pet. i. 5. And hence, (1 John vi.,) "Greater is he that is in you than in the world." The saints as they receive the Lord Jesus to rule them, that he alone may be Lord and King, not only in heaven, but in their hearts; so a false heart receives Christ, lastly, for to ease him. Sometime for to ease him of the burden of conscience; sometime to ease him of the Lord's word, the burden of his will; and hence some at last have complained, though hardly convinced of it, that they could be contented the Lord should act them; but their end was, that thereby they might be rid of their burden, and so eased by him. I have heard a question should be asked, What is the difference between the working of God's Spirit and the saints? And that the answer was, 1. The one was by graces, the other immediately. 2. The Spirit is when a man labors least. Quite cross to the stream of truth. Take heed how you understand these points aright; the depth of the most hellish villany in the world lies under them. Woe to thee that canst paint such a Christ in thy head, and receive such a Christ into thy heart, as must be a pander to your sloth; the Lord will revenge this wrong done to his glory with greater sorrows than ever any felt. To make Christ not only meat and drink to feed, but clothes to cover your sloth. Why, what can we do? what can we do? Why, as the first

Adam conveys not only guilt, but power, so the second conveys both righteousness and strength; as Christ is now triumphing by his eternal Spirit, and his life is heavenly, so if you be in Christ, there is a Spirit of Christ, whereby a never-dying life is begot, that can and does conquer; though it be but a spark, Christ maintaining it, it shall come to victory. You are forsaken of Christ, if you want this; or else take heed this color make you not forsake him.

6. Those that neglect the means, and yet look for the end in hope of future time, and so neglect the present season. Thus it is with many a one; the day of life and health, and day of ordinances, continues, and hence the sluggard cries, (Prov. xxiv. 33,) "Yet a little more slumber," I will have but a little while longer, etc. Hence, when conscience checks, ministers warn, the Lord wooes, the Spirit cries; a man puts off all with this, I hope it will be better; and hence it falls out with them as with those, (Matt. xxiv.,) "The Lord comes in a time they look not for him," and of this many on their death beds have cried out. Think of this, ye convicted persons, that know it is miserable with you, before God stop your breath; you have nothing to plead for your neglect, but hope of time. Know it, God's present seasons are golden, one moment worth eternity, and now is the time; if you neglect his season, he will not regard yours. God is never found in your time, but in his time. O, lay these things to heart, especially you that are grown weary of means, that faint in your way. God is not yet weary of continuing means; art thou weary of gaining by means? O, consider this, you that have had many hopes, desires, purposes, but all blasted, your time and means neglected. Think on this, you that have had marvelous affections, but your spirits are gone; nothing can make you mend your pace, not all ministry and word, but you are clogged with means. Remember that, (Is. lxv. 8–14,) "For my people that have sought me," etc.

Section V.

Use 5. To all those that do effectually seek the Lord in the use of means. And for discovery thereof, consider, —

1. If ever the Lord gave you a heart effectually to seek him in means, you will find mighty oppositions, temptations springing up one after another, etc., from within, from without, and the oppositions will make you seek him the more. Hence (Rom. xiii. 11, 12) he bids us "put off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light." When a man desires and lies in his sloth, he meets with little opposition or trouble of his own heart; but

here it is otherwise, therefore put on armor. And I say, the soul is made hereby to seek the Lord the more, as the blind man. Mark x. 48. "Redeem the time, because the days are evil." As it is with mariners; they will not only use fair, but side, and almost contrary winds to come near the shore they are bound for; let the Lord give any grace, O, more of that mercy, as Moses. Deut. iii. 24. Let the Lord deny, yet the soul cries the more; let agonies come, Christ prays the more; let the will oppose, he will yield himself to the Lord to cross his own will, and deny himself; peace makes him love, and affliction makes him seek the Lord early. Hence, because thou art troubled at the feeling of a slothful heart, that will make you seek for more help.

2. You will seek him with your whole heart, so that it is the Lord only that the heart is bound for. Ps. cxix. 2; Phil. iii. 12. The feeling of the Lord's power and eternal life, and that not only while means last, but when in want of and banished from means; as David forgets his crown and kingdom, and saith, (Ps. xxvii. 4,) "One thing I have desired." Hence Hezekiah had a promise of life and going to God's house when recovered; it was not life he minded so much as this, "What is the sign that I shall go to the house of the Lord?" Hence saints, though they neglect sometimes, yet as a ship driven back by neglecting winds, or as a tradesman, he is altogether for his gain, yet proves an ill husband sometimes, but when he has felt his losses he falls to his trade again. So here, like merchants seeking pearls, etc. Matt. xiii. 45. Let this comfort you though you find nothing, yet saints are a generation of seekers, finding time is not come, yet certainly you shall come to your end at last. You have no lappings for the sores of your sloth, but opening them before the Lord; the Lord will heal and help in time.

Object. But I feel no good, hence I am afraid I seek not aright.

Ans. Gal. vi. 9, "You shall reap in due time," and Heb. xi. 13. All things were cross to the promise, yet Abraham holds on still.

Object. But I find my spirit faint, and grow listless and weary.

Ans. When heart and strength fail, yet God does not. God will desert, that you may know where your strength, and heart, and help lies.

Object. But it is so great, I know no difference between mine and others' neglect.

Ans. That is sad; yet, as it is in all sins, falls into them do but undermine them the more. Peter denies Christ, as well as sleeps, yet he is the first that preacheth him. When a man's meat is so

far from doing good as that it does him hurt, he is dying: so that sin is dying, that sloth is dying, when food given to it does kill it. David is ready to give up all, yet saith, "It is good for me to draw near to God," and there the heart will repose itself again.

Section VI.

Use 6. *Of Exhort.* O, be not slothful, then; neglect no means, but use all means; get oil in your vessels, that you may get your desired end. Mariners that are bound for a voyage, when set out, will not be at rest till they are landed where they would be. It was one of the church's sorrowful complaints, (Is. lxiv. 7,) "None that stirs up himself," etc.

Object. But I find many hinderances without me, many sins within me; I have sometime neither strength (nay, which is worse) nor yet heart to seek the Lord, though my wants are many, though my days decline. How shall I do?

Ans. 1. Find out that which clogs thy heart from seeking effectually, and causes that neglect, and that makes the Lord neglect thee in thy ineffectual seeking; else thou mayst seek and never find, and that is some lust, something that eases the heart which is not God. When the soul has not bread, it will, with the prodigal, then resolve for home. Men could not live as they do, so many days without God, unless they did feed on somewhat else beside the Lord. Hence it is usual for men in means to use means for a good, and out of means to resist that good. Is. lviii. 1, 2; Zach. vii. 6. Men that would have their load drawn must first take their wild horses out of it; so do with these lusts. If, therefore, not for your own, yet for the Lord's sake, who else will not be accounted worth the seeking, find out whatever contents you. Necessity has no holidays; O, you must have him.

2. Use means, but trust not to them, nor to any strength received to carry you along in this work; you will else neglect and fall from the Lord, and the Lord from you. It is said of Asa, (2 Chron. xvi. 12, 13,) "Asa was diseased in his feet in his old age, yet he sought not to the Lord, but physicians." So it is with many a diseased Christian; they seek not to the Lord to cure their feet, but means, or themselves; hence they decay and die. You have the stream of all temptations against you; it is not your own oars, but the Lord's wind, that must carry you against it. Look, therefore, to an almighty power in means to help you, plead God's covenant to put his fear into your hearts, that you may not depart from him, and he will not forsake you. 1 Cor. xv. 10, "Paul received not grace in vain, but labors

abundantly; yet not I, but grace." There is little fear of drowning so long as we keep head above water, so long as we cleave to the Lord Jesus.

3. Love the presence of the Lord and his company. If there be any love between you, you will then find time, and nothing shall keep you from him; (Jer. ii. 1–3,) "I remember the love of thine espousals, when thou followedst me in a wilderness through pits and deserts." Remember he has been in heaven, praying for thee when thou hast been provoking of him; he has been blessing thee, when thou hast been abusing him; it may be he has let out his heart blood, to make room for thee in his heart; it may be he intends, throughout all eternity, to express his dearest love to thee; and is he not worth your love? Love him, and you will be with him; love will be stronger than death; it will break all these bonds.

4. Set before you the greatness of the good you are to use all means to gain. Why do men hunt after flesh pots? The world is esteemed great; it is near us; and so for honor. Now, Christ and eternity are far off, and hence they seem little, and hence to seek them is not made a business of greatest weight and importance. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18. "We faint not while we look to things that are eternal." Acts xxiv. 15, 16. There is not the vilest reprobate, but when he shall see the glory that shall be revealed, he shall stamp, and tear his hair, and say, O if I had known this! I hope I should never have dreamed out my time so as I have done. We look on the picture of goodness in the volume of the creatures, which satisfies not. O, never cease looking upward till you see what you seek for in the greatness of it. Suppose a man should sleep all his lifetime, and be in a dream, and in it have all the delights and glory of the world presented to him; at last the ground opens its mouth and swallows him up, and then he is awakened; Lord, how will he cry! Truly, Christ, and grace, and fellowship with God are not thought of, sought for, are small things with men; but the world is great, and this is your delight; truly, it is but your dream. What will your souls be when death opens its mouth? What a sad thing is it to see men spin cobwebs that must be swept down!

Motives. I. To those that never sought the Lord effectually to this day, nor to neglect him now. Those that are like children born before their time, that have had some sorrow after the Lord, but comforted before it was deep enough; have some desires, but eased with other things before they were satisfied with Christ himself; that have run for a while, but are grown weary before they came half way home, and so sit down in the way; like clocks

set slow in the first hour of the day, run slow all the day after. So these set back, and think they are set right, too, run slow all their life after. That as he said of a covetous man, he had a strong desire for heaven, if any would bear his charges thither; so these. And to you I speak not that never sought, but that have been seeking; yet effectually to use all means, this you never did.

1. Consider how far men have gone, what means they have used, yet have never found to this day. Luke xiii. 24. Strive, saith Christ. This I speak, because men think they may neglect their seasons of earnest pursuit after grace, men may sit still, and put all care from themselves to God, and live in their sloth. O, no; consider so many snares, so many by-paths, so many deceits within, so many sins and lusts to subdue, all time and means is little enough; take heed of spending prodigally, and think Christ's grace will bear you out. O, look upon the cries of a death bed, to see some men that have been like famishing men that have wanted bread, and then have cried, Bread, bread! but could not eat it. O, saith Paul, "I beat down my body, lest in preaching to others myself become a castaway."

2. Consider how others have broken down the greatest difficulties, and are now in glory; as, (Rev. xii. 11,) "They loved not their lives to the death." They have not only spent their time, lost their name, their comforts, but their blood, that have passed through waters, fires, bonds, imprisonments, and with Paul have not "accounted their lives dear, that they might finish their work." David was full of God; one would think sometimes he had enough, yet when he awakes he is with God at midnight, "his thoughts and reins instruct him; the law was his meditation day and night." You shall see him in the temple blessing God, on the throne advancing the Lord, on the dunghill, in banishment longing after him, when he sat amongst princes meditating; and was there here too much cost? Might any of this ointment have been spared? Consider, Christ himself (Heb. xii. 1–3) cast off sloth, "looking unto Jesus, who, for the joy, despised the shame, endured the cross," and that not for himself, it may be for thee, that thou mightst not, now he is at the right hand of God; so are the saints in heaven, and now rejoicing that ever they sought him, that they spent so much time on him.

3. Consider, there is a time of neglect of Christ, which, when past, you shall never find him again; (John vii. 3, 4,) "Ye shall seek me, but never find me." You have had many diamond days and seasons, and God gives you a space to repent, and

saith, "My Spirit shall not always strive;" it may be some are but within that space, that the Lord is at the last cast with you.

4. Consider, whatever your condition be, shake off your sloth, and set upon the means, the Lord will be found; do it in good earnest; this will be good news to you that think he will never; but be thy heart like steel, and hard, the Lord will break it; (Heb. xi. 6,) "He will be found of them that seek him diligently." And the greater things thou seekest for, the more like to get them; as one of the fathers thinks, that to pray with repetitions, is to pray for small things. "Open thy mouth wide, I will fill it;" and it may be presently, in a moment, when thou thinkest least of it, it may be at that time when thou findest most unwillingness and difficulty to seek; seek, then, and the Lord will be found. O, this damps many a man in the use of means, he thinks the Lord will never help, and hence is tormented with this thought, and sits down and rests. If you would keep a laborer from work, or a traveler from walking, put thorns in their feet; now, the work is neglected, there is pricking stuff, he can not follow on his business now; so it is here. Prov. xv. 19. Take heed, therefore, of sitting down with such thoughts as these; it is strange thou shouldst be killed for every cut, and because wounded for sin to fall off from the Lord by unbelief too.

II. Motives to you that have followed the Lord, but now have begun to neglect him; for what cause I know not; but I am sure the Lord has given you none; yet a spirit of slumber and sloth is upon you, that you are not the men you were. It may be some for want of place, want of time, many occasions, many sorrows and temptations in this wilderness; and hence no means sweet, no bed easy, your bones are broken. It may be a little time of neglect has emboldened you to a custom; it may be loose examples, the spirits of others flat, and thine does so too, whom God sent into church fellowship to quicken them. It may be an ill husband is a hinderance; a bad wife, as Job's wife; or whatever it is, O that God would speak this day to you!

1. Consider thou art nearer to thy salvation than when thou didst first believe; and then you thought no time, no pains, too much, but all too little. Rom. xiii. 11, 12. Mariners, near the shore, look out for rocks, Lord, that I may not split now. Truly, as it was with Christ, the longer he did live, the more sorrows, so with you. God has carried you near salvation; O, now being nearer, there are worse rocks; look about you now. Satan's last temptations are strongest. O, give not in now. It may be not many days nor weeks hence thou shalt come to thy journey's end. Awaken, then, out of sleep.

2. Consider how glad the Lord is of thy company; he has been so, and will be so again; thou canst not come in too late, (1 Sam. xii. 21,) as poor and vile as thou art; (Prov. viii.,) "His delight is with the sons of men." Witness mercies, witness afflictions; O, then seek him; witness desertions, then seek him; witness his sweet entertainment of thee, many a time when he has given thee meat that the world knows not of; witness so many hinderances which Satan lays in, who knows how cross it is to Christ; (Jer. ii. 1–3,) "I remember the love of thine espousals, when thou didst follow me;" especially when with most difficulty, when little strength within, when little hope without; yet I will not give over. He never forgets this. The Lord has never such sad days as when thou turnest thy back on him, and thou never so good as when thou seekest him.

3. Consider thy gains; there shall not the least endeavor, desire, pursuit after the Lord, not the least word, prayer, thought, time spent, but an abundant recompense is in Christ's hands; (1 Cor. xv. 58,) "Ever abounding, knowing that it shall not be in vain." A man that rows against the stream, a little neglect of rowing carries him down again. But, O, "be ever abounding in the Lord's work, for your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

4. Consider, if after admonition again and again, yet you nourish sloth, there is some heavy stroke near thee. Believe it, he will not alway bear with thy neglect. As nothing makes him more joyful than your company, so nothing cuts him more than your neglect; but though he save you from eternal misery, yet sometimes your greatest comfort is lost by this means. Matt. xxvi. 38, 40, 44, 45. First he stirs them up once and again, then leaves them, and comes again, and saith nothing; but the third time, "Sleep on; the Son of man is betrayed." So your comfort, and Christ and his presence are betrayed. Some have had their husbands, wives, children, estates gone, but, which is worst of all, the Lord betrayed, the comfort of their hearts gone, and hence horrors and fears surprise them.

III. Motives to us especially in this country.

1. God has put the price and wealth of the world, better than all gold and silver, into our hands, who are most unthankful, most unworthy; and will you come so far for means, and here neglect them? Will you thus neglect the Lord? Like men in consumptions, they long for any thing, and when it comes, they can not touch it. If it were night, you might fall to sleep; but the day approacheth. Shall God plant his vineyard, but you never come to eat the fruit of it?

2. Your temptations are greater here to neglect the Lord.

Others are tried with the scorching sun, there is no sleeping there. God tries us with the shadow, sets us under the vines of ordinances; others are in storms, we in calms. "When thou eatest and art full," saith Moses, (Deut. viii. 10, 11,) O, "forget not the Lord." You lose in your estates, and now you are hungry after the same again. Satan, when Christ was hungry, assaults him. It is a thousand to one if he makes you not fair offers, and overcomes. Things that cost us much, we prize, and keep, and improve, if of any use. When we go twenty miles to a sacrament, O, then it is precious; while under the bondage of oppressors, O, liberty of conscience and ordinances are precious. But when at liberty, we have liberty to have them, hence take liberty to neglect them.

3. Our enemies will be upon us. Who sees not (that observes the Lord's dealing) that some sorrows are toward, unless the Lord awaken, some sudden blasting blow? If any wind be stirring, men on the top of mountains will feel it. The Lord has set his mountain above all others, and it is folly to think to flee from the cross, unless we flee from Christ. It is part of the portion he doth owe us here, if he loves us. Yet seek the Lord, neglect no seasons to gain him, and you shall be hid. Zeph. ii. 2. Nay, when worst times come, (2 Chron. xv. 3–5,) when there is no peace, they that seek him shall find him.

I fear there is, at this day, as deep mischief plotting against New England as ever the sun saw. Enemies will first deal subtly before cruelly, but subtly that they may deal cruelly. When Pharaoh deals wisely, he means to kill. Yet the Lord shall be with us, as of late has he not been in the midst of us for a refuge? Whatever any think, I believe never did the Lord stir up such prayers, faith, etc., amongst us.

1. O, therefore, seek the Lord still in private. If you find no good, find out the sin. Is not meditation neglected? communion of saints not improved? Do not say, We can do nothing, and why are we pressed to it? If you can not, yet it is your duty, and you must be pressed; and perish you shall if you seek not; or if you be called, there is some Spirit of the Lord in you that is mighty.

2. Being come hither for public helps, and means, and all ordinances, O, do not betray your liberties; but lose your blood before you lose them, and the Lord in them. Bear the ark still on your shoulders, that the Lord may dwell with you. Hence,—

1. If you would have the walls of magistracy be broken down,

(the means to preserve the church and means among you,) if they make laws, deride them; if they execute laws, appeal from them.

2. Would you have confusion, the mother of discord, among the people? let every man once, one day in the year, turn magistrate, and outface authority, and profess it is his liberty. Would you have rapines, thefts, injustice abound? let no man know his own, by removing the landmark, and destroying properties.

3. Would you have God's ordinances in the purity of them removed? keep out the load of superstition, but yet, for peace sake, suffer a few seeds to be sown among you.

4. Would you have all the messengers of the gospel at first reviled, at last massacred? profess they are no better than scribes and Pharisees, persecuting Egyptians, enemies to the Lord Jesus, and the more devout the worse; as those that stirred up storms in Germany said, Christ had four great enemies — the pope, Anabaptists, Martin Luther, but especially John Calvin.

5. Would you ruin the gospel? set not Popery against it, but gospel against gospel, promises against promises, Christ against Christ, Spirit against Spirit, grace against grace, and then he is twice beaten that falls by his own weapons.

6. Would you have oppressors set over you, to remove ordinances, to increase your burdens? maintain this principle then, that they will not assault us first by craft and subtlety, but openly and violently.

7. Would you have this state in time to degenerate into tyranny? take no care, then, for making laws. When they are made, would you have all authority turned to a mere vanity? be gentle, and open the door to all comers that may cut our throats in time; and, if being come, they do offend, threaten them and fine them, but use no sword against them. You fathers of the country, be not offended; this I speak not to disparage any; the practice speaks otherwise; I only forewarn; I hope the Lord has prepared better days and mercies for us; I am sure he will, if what means we have we preserve, and what we preserve, we, through grace, shall improve.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT THE HEARTS AND SOULS OF BELIEVERS ARE MADE AS VESSELS ONLY FOR THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST, HIS SPIRIT, AND THE GRACES THEREOF.

SECTION I.

2. THE inward principle, wherein lies the second difference which is plainly expressed.

We are now to inquire further concerning these vessels and the oil in them. Vessels were the place only of receiving and preserving the oil for the continual burning and shining of the lamps; so that, though in some scriptures, by lamp is understood both the vessel and the lamp by a figure, yet in distinct phrase of speech, that is properly the lamp which burns and gives light, and that which contains the oil to nourish, this is the vessel; so that the vessels were not separate things from the lamp, as though the lamp was in one hand, and a vessel in another; this was neither the custom nor comeliness of that age to cumber themselves thus; but the lamp (as it is in ours) was that part which was kindled and lighted, the vessel that which kept the oil to serve this end; and hence the folly of five of them appeared, that they would carry burning lamps with empty vessels, just as if a man should draw the wick through the oil that it may burn for a time, and provide no oil in the vessel to maintain the lamp; however, all comes to one (if they be separate) in respect of that that I aim at.

Thus, literally, we see what the lamp, vessel, and oil is; now, what is spiritually meant thereby?

1. For the oil; what is that? I intend not here to show the fond and various apprehensions of Popish writers, who understand by oil, alms, good works, a good intention, etc. But by oil is meant the Spirit of Christ and the graces of it, peculiar to all the elect; and thus, in Scripture phrase, (1 John ii. 27,) the Spirit is called "the anointing;" and the graces of the Spirit, (Cant. i. 3,) "the smell of Christ's ointments." Harlots love him for the gifts he sends, but virgins for the grace he has. That oil which ran first on Aaron's head, and runs down to his skirts, is here meant. Now, as Christ himself had not the Spirit without graces, nor these without the Spirit, but both, so both these being in him as in the fountain, they are in us as in the vessels.

2. Christ being the fountain of all grace, and having the

Spirit without measure, and, therefore, has enough to spare, he can not be meant by these vessels which had but their measure, and such a measure as that they had none to spare for the other. Therefore, by vessels are meant principally the precious souls of the faithful, into which this golden oil was put; and, therefore, (2 Cor. iv. 7,) "We have this treasure in earthen vessels;" and, (Rom. ix. 33,) "They are vessels of glory, prepared unto glory," and so frequently; so that herein the foolish fall short, for the foolish boasted of Christ out of them, but where was the Spirit and virtue of Christ in them? And this is conceived to be the reason why the main difference is not made, by the want of the external principle, viz., Christ, but by want of the internal principle and work; this they had not. 1. They had so much oil, i. e., lighter strokes of the Spirit, as kindled a profession, but they had not enough. 2. They had so much oil and light as continued their profession for a while, but it continued not long.

Here, therefore, observe these four things.

Observ. 1. That the precious souls of the faithful are vessels made only, or chiefly, to receive and preserve the presence of the Spirit and the grace of Christ.

Observ. 2. That within these vessels there is an inward principle of grace and life.

Observ. 3. There is a certain measure, degree, plenitude, or fullness of the Spirit of grace in the heart of the faithful, which the unsound, though most glorious professors of the gospel, fall short of.

Observ. 4. That the graces of the saints, wherewith their hearts by the Spirit are filled, are constant, and of an everlasting and eternal nature.

These three last answer three questions. If any ask the difference between the virgins, the foolish want, and the wise have, an inward principle of the Spirit of life. If it be said, hypocrites have an inward work, yet this inward principle is such a fullness of Spirit which they ever fall short of, and this will make them known for the present. If, again, it be said, that many flourish gloriously for a time, yet it is of an everlasting nature, and this will manifest them one from another in time to come.

The first point, therefore, I will only touch on now.

Section II.

Doct. 1. That the precious souls and hearts of all the faithful are vessels made chiefly and only to receive and preserve the

Spirit and grace of Christ, or the gracious presence of the Spirit of Christ. That, as it is with the souls of the wicked, they are made only to hold Satan, sin, and wrath, and so fitted for destruction, so the souls of the saints are made and fitted only to receive and nourish the Spirit, grace, and love of Christ. That, as it is with princes, the best rooms are reserved only for them; their attendants may come in and out to serve them, but it is their room, their lodging. So here, the hearts of the faithful, and the best rooms, best affections of it, are only to entertain the Lord and his graces and Spirit; yet other things may come in and out as attendants to him, to serve him, but the rooms themselves are only for his proper use. 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. The church is God's house. Now, there are many vessels, (many souls;) some baser, of wood and earth, some of honor. What are these? *Ans.* "If a man purge himself from these;" for no man is born with a next disposition to receive grace, as a vessel full of puddle water that must be first cast out. Now, when this is done, he is a vessel meet for his Master's use, prepared, etc. The best vessels abide in the house, not for their own or servants' use, but for the master's use only. And though the Spirit may withdraw for some time, and they be unable to do any good work, yet they are prepared for the Spirit, and so for every good work; and here is all the use of the vessel of honor. Hypocrites are vessels of pomp, and state, and ornament. O, the brave church of Sardis! the profound judgments, deep heads, eminent Christians; but not vessels of honor, because not vessels of use, only for their Master, only to receive the eternal anointing of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. If you would know the certainty of this more fully, 1. Go and ask themselves, Is it so or not? If they be of age, and know themselves, they will say, I am the Lord's only; (Is. xliv. 4, 5,) "When they spring up as willows by the watercourses; one shall say, I am the Lord's." As an eminent light said, when dying, O Lord, I will be thine. Ask the world whose they are, and to what use and purpose they serve. They will answer, they are none of ours; and, therefore, (John xv. 19,) "the world hates them." Ask the Lord himself; he will profess, though many wants and weaknesses in them, — nay, though sometimes they are weary and neglect him, fall and soil themselves, — yet, (Is. xliii. 21,) "This people have I formed for myself." Vessels formed and fitted of God only for his glory.

Reason 1. Because all the creatures in the world are theirs and servants to them, and, therefore, they are for the Lord only. 1 Cor. iii. 21–23. If the more we took care for and set our

hearts upon the creature, if the more we were conversant with it, the more we should have and the better we should live. Or if they should not serve us, unless we did first bow down our knees to worship them, and our backs to bear them; then, seeing the world lives by catching, we might then disrobe and dis-throne our souls, and care more for these things and less for the Lord; love these things more and the Lord less; but the Lord Jesus having taken all care for his people, and bearing more love to them, and having more care of them than themselves, and, therefore, having given all creatures in heaven, sea, and dry land to serve them, they ought to be and are only for him. Hos. ii. 21, 23. When a man is the seed of God, and born for him, now all creatures serve him; hence 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. It is a prevailing motive with all the saints, we have a living God that gives us all things; all creatures being dead, and not able of themselves to help us, therefore, trust not on these things, but him only; be not high-minded in these things, but magnify him only. We know how angry God was with Belshazzar for profaning the vessels of the Lord's house in making them quaffing-bowls, and turning them to common use. When a man is brought to that misery that he has none, nor knows of none to be a friend to take care or thought for him, none that loves him, then he shifts for himself, and becomes a servant. But those that know, as women, that they have rich husbands to live on, they take care (1 Cor. vii. 34) how to please them; so here. What is the reason that men are mad for this world? Because they, poor creatures, have no friend, know no friend; but saints have him and know him. John xvii. 2. The saints are given to Christ, Christ to them, and all the world put into Christ's hand for us, (for the creatures are not given to us immediately to our own dispose, and hence we have not much of this world,) to what end? That so he might give eternal life begun here. This is the only gift, and last, and best, and worthy of himself, and this only we receive.

Reason 2. In regard of that blessed liberty all the faithful are brought into; for what is a Christian liberty? Is it to serve men? No. 1 Cor. vii. 23. Therefore, serve not yourselves. Is it, then, to serve your own lust? No. Rom. vi. 22, "You are made free from sin and servants unto God." Is it, then, to serve any creature out of yourselves? No. Gal. iv. 1. The world is yours already, (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22,) given to you, bought for you; spend not, therefore, one groat more to purchase it, but keep those affections and hearts for the Lord, much less imprison not and imbondage not yourselves for it. A Christian's liberty,

which God crowns him with above all the princes of the world, is to be only for the Lord, which liberty all creatures groan to be in. Rom. viii. 21, 22. To be for God and a lust, for Christ and this world, it is a shameful bondage, and most lamentable, and you are not at liberty yet, if not only for the Lord. When the children of kings and peers, of princes, shall be made to come at the call of their grooms and kitchen boys, if ever they stood before the face of princes, they will count this a heavy thralldom and bondage; so, if ever you stood before the God of the whole earth, you will account it a heavy bondage to have a heart sometime for and sometime not for the Lord. Is not this liberty? No; but to have a heart only determined to the Lord; as it is in angels, and in the man Christ Jesus. Verily, look as the Lord leaves his people for a time to their liberty in sin, so that their hearts are determined only to sin, that they are fit only to receive the suggestions and pleasures of it, but fit to quench the Lord's Spirit; so the Lord Jesus making himself and grace more sweet than their lusts, their hearts are determined only for him, their vessels are only for his oil. Rom. vi. 19. The liberty of will that Arminians plead for is nothing but the hypocrisy of a false heart, whose heart being touched partly with God and partly with the creature, hence is always falling from one to the other. James i., "Double-minded men." But the saints are determined unto one, and then made perfect in one.

Reason 3. In regard of the fullness and all-sufficiency of the Spirit of grace, which their hearts are made fit vessels to receive, and do receive; they finding enough there, God reserves them, and they reserve themselves, only for the receiving of this; (John vi. 68,) "Will you depart? Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of life;" and so the Spirit of life, that have quickened our hearts when dead, that do put fresh life to us when dying, that comfort our hearts when sorrowing. Here is the life, glory, the life of Christ, the life of God. Other things do but dead our hearts, thou hast words of life: (John iv. 14,) "The water that I shall give," 1. Be that which shall quench all his thirst to other things; so that, though a man wants them, yet his stomach is gone, which the damned shall find otherwise. 2. A well of water in him, ever near him; men have their accommodations far off, but this is in him. Your hearts within are troubled, perplexed, and behold this is in you. 3. Springing up, continually increasing; for to have a good thing, and not to be satisfied in our desires with it, what is it but a misery? Hence it springs up unto everlasting life, which is the fourth, viz., The continuance of it; this will be here till my mortality is swal-

lowed up of life. Like a leaking ship, that takes in water by little and little, till at last it is swallowed up in the sea.

Section III.

Use 1. Hence we may see the reason why the Lord doth not abundantly reveal and communicate himself to the souls of many men. What is the matter? Is it because they find no want of his Spirit, and life, and grace, and peace, and glory? Yes, they do, and hence express their wants to men, and complain of their wants to God. Is it for this that Christ has not wherewithal? Yes, he has received the Spirit without measure, (John iii. 34,) and fountains alway run, though men seldom drink. What, then, is it because they bring not their hearts, hold not their vessels, under the Lord's horn of oil? Yes, that they do; but their vessels are naught; they are not only for him; they feel their want of grace and Christ, but not only or chiefly of this. Special grace shall never be poured into a common vessel, a common heart, that lies in common for God, and lust, and world, too. The honor, peace, life, gain, of a God are sweet and precious. "Lord, ever give me that water to drink." But you have five husbands, and seek not this only. Hence, if the Lord denies you, you can be content, because you have something else to fill your vessels; if the Lord gives, you undervalue it, and grow worse; and the very rising of that common grace you have is the beginning of your apostasy and setting off from God. And hence no wonder why you pray, but never have, (James i. 6, 7;) you want and crave, but never find; your vessel is naught, though the Lord is good. It is a black mark that thou art in bondage to the creature, and didst never know what the liberty, even the glorious liberty of a son means. And it is a most grievous bondage to be half unloosed, and yet to be in bonds. And I assure you, if you knew the gift of God, if ever you tasted how sweet the Lord is, this is the only thing your souls will cry for; that when you come to ask, and the Lord saith, What would you have? O, the Spirit of life! O, the anointing of my blessed head! And what else? It only. This is it my vessel is made to hold. I am not made for my lust, nor sins, nor world. I would I had a bigger vessel, a larger heart to receive thy grace only. I confess, a gracious heart may, for a time, be carried too violently after other things, and yet seek the Lord, too, as Solomon. Eccles. ii. But after it knows Christ better, it is more reserved now for him, as Gen. xxxix. 3–6. Joseph's master for a time kept things in his own hand; but when he saw

the Lord was with Joseph, and that he was prosperous and blessed, then he made him overseer, and he knew not, it is said, what he had, save only the bread that he did eat. So it is in our Joseph. As the poor woman that knew the Messiah, she leaves her vessel, her water-pot, with him, and now would have all the city to come and see, and believe in him, and depend on him only, trust to him only, etc. Dost, therefore, seek, and find not? Hast been long waiting, and feelest not? And thou wonderest at it! Others comforted and I not! Search if this be not the cause; it may be thy heart is not set only for this, but on thy back, belly, lots, ease, what shall I eat, drink, etc. As some women, because God does not feed so liberally their sweet tooth, their lickerish longings, build them ceiled houses, measure their present condition according to their sinful humor; nothing can please them, neither husband, servants, ministers, nor God's ordinances. Is this a vessel for the Lord and his grace only? You must, you will have a longer coat than you can well wear; hold here. Never think to have one prayer answered. If this night thy day of misery should come, cry thou mayst, but no God to hear thee or help thee. O, a little oil, now a little grace, now a little mercy, Lord, now. O, no; you have no vessel to hold it. But, O, bless the Lord, you know it. Others, it may be, are not so full of these sores of impatiency; but you pray for God and grace, and have it not. Why so? These are not the things that you are only set for. Why? Because you are content without them. I am not, you will say; but you are, for you do not lament daily after the Lord for these things only. That which only satisfies, that thy heart is not at rest till it find. I hope I may have help for all this. No, saith James, think not so. O, therefore, bless the Lord! You know what hurts you; saints have hurts thus; but they purge themselves, and hence are blessed vessels still. When Moses was begging for Israel, "Mine angel," saith God, "shall go with you;" I will not. No; thou only, "else let us die here." Exod. xxxiii. This prayer wins the field and wears the garland. The evils of the churches are many, an hour of temptation is coming on; scandals are like to be great; the subtleties of enemies many. Now, we pray, and yet these have come, and we fear they will come. O beloved, go to the Lord, and plead with him only for this; and when thou canst procure nothing for thyself, yet let it fare well with Sion; and this only I must have, (Ps. xxvii. 4,) "One thing I have desired." You shall have it then, else not.

Use 2. See the great sin of those that lose their life, preserve not the Spirit when he comes to them in ordinances. You are

vessels only made for the Lord, and will you lose that which he drops in? There are no others can receive him, (John xiv. 17) and when he comes to you, do you thus requite him? etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IN BELIEVERS AS THE PRINCIPLE OF THEIR SPIRITUAL LIFE AND HOLINESS.

SECTION I.

Doct. 2. That within these vessels is an inward principle of life and grace. Or, the burning, shining profession of all the faithful, it proceedeth from an inward principle of the Spirit of grace, by the means of which their lamp burns and their profession shines.

For this I understand by oil in the vessel, the Spirit of Jesus, not out of us, but received in us; not coming only upon us, for so he may on foolish virgins by Balaamitish ravishments, and hypocritical pangs, and land-flood affections; but abiding in us, and that not as it doth in hypocrites, but as it is in Christ Jesus, without measure, both Spirit and graces, so it abides in us in measure; in him as the fountain, in us as the vessels, from whose fullness we receive the same. So that by oil is not meant the external principle of all life, the Lord Jesus having Spirit and grace enough, but keeping our hearts empty of it. But the Lord Jesus in us, who is not in us but by his Spirit, even the Spirit of life, from whence all our actions spring, and from which oil our lamp burns. This, therefore, I say, the profession of the faithful springs not from outward motives or principles of motion, as the actions of hypocrites, sometimes sudden praise, sometimes gain, sometimes fears, sometimes fleshly hopes, sometimes sudden conceit and fancy, sometimes irruption and rushings of the Spirit upon them, but there is a spring within, there is a life within, there is oil in the vessel to fill the lamp, and so hence it burns; (Eph. ii. 1,) "You hath he quickened who were dead in sins;" i. e., you were held as fast under the power of your sins as a dead man is under the bonds of death; but now, in the room of that death, there is the Spirit of life and the life of the Spirit. Now, life is an inward principle of motion of any thing in its own place; as the sun, and trees, and grass, and cattle. You may take a stone, or a millstone, or wheel, and move it, yet they have no life, because this is not from an inward principle;

so hypocrites may be acted and moved by the great power of the Spirit in an ordinance, yet not living, but dead still. John iv. 14; the water — which is the Spirit — "is a spring of living water in him." Cisterns may have water in them, but no spring that is running winter and summer. 1 John iii. 9. This is called the seed remaining in him, which is that new creation, new birth, which the verse itself expounds, so that he can not sin; it is against his nature, now he can not be a sin-maker. Balaam could not curse the people of God, and many can not do as others do. Why? is it because they are born of God? No; but from some other respects, and hence (Matt. xiii. 21) the stony ground fell away, because they had not the root within. This is called the inner man, the good treasure of the heart, opposite to the evil treasure of the heart of a wicked man. Now, as an evil man acts not only from Satan, the evil spirit, but the inward power of lust, so the saints. Matt. xii. 35. And here I intend not to show what this inward principle is particularly, for that I reserve to the two last points; yet, lest any should stumble, let me speak to two sorts.

1. Know some of you, that there are not only external actings of the Spirit from whence we act, but a new nature in the saints.

2. Let others know, 1. That as before the Lord calls we are dead, so after we are alive this inward principle is not perfect here. Hence actions sometimes cease, and when they do not, yet are corrupted, as *læsa principia* act, but never err in their act; hence have need of pardon from, and acceptance in, the Lord Jesus. 2. That this is not in us as in Adam, who did not need to borrow life of another, but it stands in daily need of the Lord Jesus; and hence this inward principle acts, but it is by faith, the operations of which are the wagons to victual the camp continually, especially in time of need, and which is part of this inward principle; and hence, (1 Pet. i. 5,) "You are kept by power and faith;" i. e., your souls, graces, lives, are kept by the Spirit, but through faith in us, "to salvation."

Let me, therefore, prove these three things to you for opening of this point: —

1. That the Spirit of the Lord Jesus is in the souls of the faithful.

2. That there is a principle of created graces, or the life of the Spirit in them.

3. That, from this principle of the Spirit dispensing himself by his graces, our lamp burns, our acts of profession spring and shine forth.

First. That the Spirit of Jesus is in the souls of the faithful (1 John ii. 27.) "The anointing teacheth you all things." Rom. viii. 11, "The Spirit that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead dwells in us." The manner of his being in us I intend not to meddle with, unless I saw more cause. I do believe the manner of his abiding in us, and his nearness to all the saints, when seen of us, may astonish our own spirits, and shall one day confound all the world; only know, as the martyr said, "He is come, he is come." The spirit of the world and Satan is cast out, (1 Cor. ii. 12,) and in room of them enters the Spirit of God.

Secondly. That the Spirit so is in the faithful, as that there is a principle of created graces in them, or an inward principle of life and grace. Not that these alone make this inward principle, but the Spirit in us working of them, working by them. And truly it is a sad thing if the proving of such a principle shall be an attributing too much to grace in us.

1. Therefore, to deny this is to deny Christ to be our sanctification; for beside the passive obedience of Christ, we are justified by his active obedience also; i. e., his inward conformity to the law and his external obedience to the law. So that graces as they are in Christ become our justification, and hence he is said to be "our righteousness." No man can stand before God but by perfect holiness, but by doing whatever the law requires, and continuing so to do; this is not in us, this is in Christ; this, as it is in Christ, is properly our righteousness or justification. Now, what is our sanctification? If not graces in Christ, then graces received from Christ Jesus, which is this inward principle I now speak of; and, therefore, to deny this is no less than to deny Christ is our sanctification; but Paul saith, "The Lord sanctify you in soul, and body, and spirit." 1 Thess. v. 23. And if it were so, a man may have a heart unsanctified and Christ too.

2. If there should not be those graces, then a Christian was not bound to add one grace to another, but then the apostle's precept should be broken; (2 Pet. i. 7, 8,) and so a Christian could not grow in grace, for graces are perfect in Christ; and the Spirit does not grow in grace, and the immediate operations of the Spirit increasing in us are not properly graces, no more than the act of seeing is the eye, no more than giving goods to be burned is love.

3. Then we are not to pray for graces, if there be no such thing to be found in the heart of saints; but (Ps. li. 10,) David prays, "Create in me a clean heart;" now, if it be a thing created in me, it is not the Spirit only in me, for that can not be

created. I doubt not but David had a clean heart, but he fell in part; and, therefore, look as there needs a creating power to make, so there is a creating power to restore us again to what is lost.

4. Then the saints have none of their sins mortified; for it is as with the eye, being made to see, if sight goes out, darkness comes in, and if that be subdued, sight is renewed. So the soul being made only for God, and to bear his image, blot out that darkness and sin comes in; cast out sin, the Lord and his image and graces come in. If, therefore, there be no graces in the saints, then no sin mortified; truly, if so, then the end of Christ's coming and dying is quite abolished. 1 John iii. 8, and Rom. vi. 2, 3.

5. Then the Lord should be false in his covenant, and break oath and be forsworn; for, (Jer. xxxi. 32,) "I will write my law in their hearts." Luke i. 73, 74. So that if you will not believe man, yet believe God; and if you will not believe his word, yet his oath. O, but many good Christians find no such thing. But is it so, as they find it indeed? Either, then, they are no Christians, or else the Lord is forsworn.

Thirdly. That by the inward principle of Spirit and graces, our lamp burns and shines, our actions issue. The Spirit enables a man to know, and hence the act flows, he doth know the Lord. The Spirit enables inwardly for to love the Lord, and hence it doth love him. That, as Christ saith, "A good tree brings forth good fruit," from an inward sap received from the root, and by abiding on the root; so here.

1. Those that are renewed to Adam's image in their measure, have, according to that measure, power to act; or in those graces there is power to act, for he had power so to do. Every creature in the world had a law of nature to carry them to their end, and so were carried to it. But Adam had a law of divinity, whereby he, being a cause by counsel, was enabled by God to carry himself toward his end. Now, we are renewed to that image in part; (Eph. iv. 24;) I know there is difference between Adam's power to act, which had no faith, and ours, that has. And do not think that this doth advance nature and the power of man no more than the execution of the promise of the covenant of grace doth destroy grace and advance nature. For the writing again the law in our hearts is that which this covenant promiseth; nay, this doth honor the riches of grace, that a man being under the power of sin, and can not get deliverance, the Lord should now give a humble, conquering spirit; never a precious heart but will be thankful for it.

2. Because the graces in us are received from the Lord Jesus his fullness. John i. 16. Now, the graces in Christ are not dead, but living; are not weak, but powerful; the Spirit of grace is now triumphing in him, it is so in us only; it is in him in the highest degree, in us in a lower. And therein consists our likeness to Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 18. And to deny this is to deface the image of the Lord Jesus. Without Christ a Christian can do nothing; but how doth Christ do all by the Spirit without graces? (I speak not of conversion where it is without graces as causes.) No, truly; as he acts, so we act in part. Unless any will say, We have not received grace for grace, or are in no measure like the image of Christ.

3. If the first Adam has conveyed to all his members a power of corruption, then the second Adam also a power of godliness contrary to that; (2 Tim. iii. 5;) yet in measure still, so as the apostle saith, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

Quest. But what measure of power is it?

Ans. I know no man that can, from any ground, limit the measure of it. For it may be in some men in greater power, in some men in less; in the same man, at one time, in a greater measure, at another time less. If one ask of trees, what measure of fruit they can bring forth, we can not tell, because sometime more, sometime less; and the same tree more one year than another, and more at one time of the year than another; for they have their winter season. Only this, whereas before conversion he is stark dead to act, now he is alive, and is not dead. And if a man should, after conversion, be but in the next disposition to receive grace, then how could one Christian be more grown and stronger in grace in his inner man than another? I know not any to question this, only I speak it to cut off their carnal hopes, that think Christ is theirs, when they have nothing, can do nothing, and slightly say, He must do all; I can not. I tell you the saints can; they can not but love the Lord, and choose the Lord, etc.

Object. 1. But must not a Christian deny himself, and alway go to Christ for power to do, and so be humble and empty?

Ans. 1. You must, because this is the means to live to Christ; but this does not argue you have no power at all. A man must pray for his "daily bread," much more for "daily grace;" but does this argue a man has no bread in his house? No; this is the means to have it continued and blessed. Easily can the Lord take away bread, or the staff of bread. Graces extinguish not faith, but help it.

2. A Christian can do no duty perfectly, hence must repair to Christ to help him to do every duty better; hence, though he must use that power he has, and do what he can, yet he must not content himself with what he has, but seek for more; and what a sweet life is this! What honor would here come in? God lets in a new light into my mind, now I may and must see his truth; I saw it yesterday, but I may and must go to Christ to do it better; I must not quench the spirit of prayer, but carry the key with me, and next day pray better. And thus the soul is thankful for what it has, and emptying itself notwithstanding that, and daily, then, receiving from Christ. And I believe many Christians fail here. As in the body meat feeds and strengthens life, so I can not live without Christ.

Object. 2. But does not this make a man trust to graces?

Ans. To act from them is not to trust to them, no more than for a diligent hand to trust to his diligence when he acts diligently that so he may be rich.

Object. 3. But does not this dishonor grace to do all by the power of it?

Ans. Then the saints in heaven that are made perfectly like Christ, and that love the Lord perfectly, should not honor grace by this means, when as this is it that makes them honor it most of all. As David, Lord, what am I, and my people, that we should offer willingly? so here.

Section II.

Use 1. See, hence, what cause of thankfulness to all the people of God that the Lord should make their souls the vessels (which he might easily and justly have dashed in pieces) to receive and preserve this eternal anointing. I do believe there is no man that knows the bitterness of sin, the plague of his own heart, but when he sees Christ is his, yet it makes him mourn that there should be so little suitableness between the Lord and him, so little likeness between his life and Christ's; what though the Lord love me, and yet my heart weary of him? what though the Lord bless me, and my heart abuse him? and hence this makes it thankful. Rom. vii. 24, 25. This is so far from dishonoring grace, as that the apostle makes this the matter of admiration of God's grace; (Eph. ii. 3, 4,) "God, who is rich in mercy, when dead in sins, has quickened us." Not only quickened our head, (for hence is cause of eternal praise,) but us; and hence he has us set up "in heavenly places in him." This is the state of all men, they can not do one spiritual act; now

that the Lord should help when all creatures left us is wonderful; but that it should be with such a life, even the life of Christ Jesus himself; for the same Spirit that raised him from the dead dwells in us. 1 Pet. v. 1. This is mercy, indeed; that he should not only die for us, and live in heaven for us, but that he should love so dearly as to come and live in us; that, when our sins had slain him, he should not only come and dwell in our houses, nor only lay his head in our bosom, but live in our hearts, where he finds such poor welcome and ill entertainment at our hands. I tell you this is wonderful, to make his habitation in us, that, before we go to live with him, he should live in us; let them that never knew what this meant refuse to be thankful, but if you find it so, forget not this love; (John xiv. 17,) "I will send the Spirit, whom the world can not receive, because it knows him not." The Lord sends the Spirit in common graces, and the world does receive that also in prophetical and miraculous gifts, and it does receive that; but this Spirit which God pours on the thirsty, this Spirit with which God fills the empty, they can not receive this. O that you should have it, when as they know it not!

1. Hence, therefore, take heed of not owning the Spirit in this his presence. Do you thus requite the Lord, O unthankful world; not so much as to own the presence of such a friend, neither in yourselves, nor yet in others? How like the world is it to think that there is no such thing!

2. Take heed, therefore, of not esteeming highly of it. If ever God broke thy heart, thou wilt esteem this life, this principle, as the greatest piece of love; and say, Lord, I shall account this as the greatest part of love in the world; (Ps. cxix. 68,) "Thou art good; O, teach me thy statutes." Now, to undervalue this, and to account it common, and hence as no sign of love, it is a part of unthankfulness.

3. Take heed of imprisoning the Spirit of grace, common truth. Rom. i. 18. It were fearful to imprison and silence that, much more this. It was the complaint of the church in those days, "None stirs up himself." Is. lxiv. 7. What strength the Lord gives, let me use; what I want, the Lord has enough to help me withal; put it to exercise, or else affliction will.

4. Take heed of weakening and enfeebling this principle; the church of Sardis' things were ready to die in it; you should strengthen this inner man, not weaken it, either by not feeding it with Christ, or wounding it with known sin against Christ. Therefore, let all the churches know this, and take heed that you do not refuse to own this: where else will you make the differ-

ence between men, that either churches may discern them, or you may discern them, and so have peace yourselves?

Hence see the reason of that inward hypocrisy that is in men's hearts, so that the best profession of many a man is but a scheme, an image, a very craft, a very artificial form; all the duties are fair without, but sapless, lifeless within; here is the reason, they have no inward principle of life, or if they do go to Christ, they have no such principle within them to carry them to him, so as to receive life from him; and hence confess sin without sorrow or shame, petition without thirsting, live without love, do without life, because there is no spring, but a dry heart within; and hence they must do duty, but they must make dead work of it, and hence all is but an appearance, and at best but a would be. This is, in a great measure, in saints, when the spirit within is quenched, but it is in full age and strength in hypocritical hearts; (Jer. iv. 14,) when the profession of Judah was great, and the prophets had scarce any thing to say against them for outside, "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness;" there thy woe lies, it enters to the very heart; so Christ, "How can he that is evil bring forth good fruit?" And this is that which may make men mourn: if I forsake all profession, I shame myself before men; if not, I must blaspheme the Lord's name, and play the hypocrite before the Lord. Matt. xii. 33–35.

Section III.

Use 3. To take heed of denying the grace of God, or this inward principle, in whole or in part; for this inward principle being the life of Christ in us, to deny this is to deny Christ, and to take away his life; and such the Lord will deny before his angels another day: when they shall say, "Have we not eat and drank in thy presence?" he shall answer, "I never knew you." I shall, therefore, direct my speech to four sorts.

First. To those that deny created graces in the saints peculiar to them only. It is said there are none such in the country; if there are not, it may be there have been, and it may be will be; and, therefore, I will speak; for I believe it is a delusion digged and hatched out of the steam of the lowest sink of hell; and, therefore, that all may take heed of the evil of it, I will first show the evil of it, then the causes that do beget it.

I. The evils of this delusion are these:—

1. It settles and fastens a man under the power of all his sin, and yet with a quiet conscience, and yet to keep his Christ, too. It transcends my capacity from whatever I have read, or have

heard, or have felt, or can imagine, how the power of sin can be taken away, but where the Spirit infuseth the contrary grace: an empty house, swept and garnished with common gifts, is but a fitting house for Satan to return into; say, therefore, a man may have no such graces, and yet have Christ, and them in Christ, you stake this man down under his sin, and make this member of Satan a member of Christ Jesus; and, upon this ground, all churches in the land may be forced in conscience to take in all profane members, if they plead Christ, and their allness in him.

2. This blurs all the glory of a Christian, or at least the greatest part of it; for what is the glory of a saint? It is to be like Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, to bear his image before God and men. As to see a man with a swine's face would be the shame of a man, to see a Christian with Satan's image is the shame of a Christian; but to be like our head, this is our glory, though it be in sufferings, (2 Cor. iii. 18,) heavenly, humble, compassionate, holy, as he was; and hence, when God has a mind to make churches or Christians base in the eyes of the world, he will withdraw here; and when he intends to draw the world after him, he will glorify it with his glory. Is. lx. 6, 7.

3. It cuts off a Christian from all hope of glory: how many be there that scramble and catch at Christ, and every one saith, He is mine; the proud man saith, He is mine, and hopes now verily to be saved, but that hope is in vain; they have Christ out of them, but where is Christ in them? The life of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ? (Col. i. 27,) "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

4. Give me but one place in all the book of God, where blessedness is bestowed upon or conveyed unto any, or promised but to such as have these graces; "Blessed is he that feareth the Lord, and greatly delighteth," etc. Ps. cxii. 1, 2. If there be no such thing, let any man expect it if he can.

II. The causes.

1. A magnifying Christ, and making him our sanctification, when as you heard the last day, this is to deny him to be our sanctification. He becomes our righteousness by imputation of his holiness, and our sanctification by infusing of it. Nay, hence a man deprives himself of all good in the Lord Jesus, when a man denies all grace in himself, and then flies for sanctuary unto Jesus Christ; (1 John i. 6, 7,) "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie," etc. And hence it seems they denied men to have sin, (ver. 8,) boasting of fellowship with Christ. Ver. 6.

2. Because there are (say men) only immediate actings of the Spirit. If this be so, then there is seeing in a Christian without an eye, and hearing without an ear, and knowing Christ without an understanding, and loving without love, and living without life, and feeding and eating without a mouth; and then, when these actings are over, a Christian is like another man; there is no law remains written on his heart, and so Christ should enter into his saints, like Satan into the serpent, who only acts the serpent, and when that is done, he remains a serpent again. Know it, the Lord Jesus his greatest work is not only to change the acts, but to change the heart; not only to put new actions, but a new nature into men.

3. Because men know not the Spirit, never felt the presence, nor power, nor comfort of it themselves; and hence men do as some countries, because themselves are black, they paint the devil white; (John xiv. 17,) "The world can not receive, because it knows him not." Give me any Christian living that ever found the sweetness of it, but his longings were to have more of that grace, to "forget things behind, and reach to things before, even to the resurrection of the dead," whom I believe none will say want all habits of grace. I look upon the opinion as coming with a curse from God. A man hath been a dry professor long, conscience saith, there is no grace in the heart, and hence is troubled; true, saith he, there is none in saints, it is in Christ, and there he catcheth and deceives himself.

Secondly. Those that do acknowledge them, but any power or activity in them they deny; they say there is oil, indeed, in the vessel, but it helps not, it is no means to make the lamp to burn or shine; there is the life of Christ, but it is a dead life; they call them the graces of Christ, but they are but fruitless graces. I confess it, if you consider them without the Spirit of Christ, they are no true graces, much less active or living ones; but consider them thus: they have a power, as take the least grain of corn, there is a growing power in it, and fructifying too in it, by dying first, though it actually doth not fructify presently, and though there must be rain, and sun must shine also, and a providence accompanying of it; so it is in the graces of saints. And hence it is called a "law of the mind;" there is a power of a law, as of sin; and hence, as Christ grew in wisdom and stature, so all the members of Christ are like unto him.

I. The evil of this.

1. This abates of the excellency of grace, as from a jewel to take away the operative virtue of it. For it is not like Christ's now, which is strong through God, not weak; which is living,

not dead. This is not like the glorious graces of saints triumphing. This makes the graces of saints of less excellency than common graces; common grace will make a man ride over many a sin, and run exceeding fast, though he fall at last. A man that hath been angry, it will make him very quiet and still; and is there no more power in this?

2. This will make a man content himself with a bare form, with a false confidence, if this be true. For take a man that hath been long seeking to get strength against a vile heart, and he finds none; there is no power of heavenliness, he is earthy; no meekness, he is proud: I would say to him, Do you ever think to get any power of meekness, love, faith, etc.? You shall never do it, never have it here; all your strength is immediately from Christ; look for it there; in conscience a man must cease there. And it is certain all our strength is in and from the Lord; but it is dispensed mediately; (Eph. iii. 16,) Paul prays "he may be strengthened with might in the inner man." Or, thus, a man may not pray for strength of grace, which Paul refused not.

3. Then the saints, if they be asked whether they believe or can love the Lord Jesus, their answer must be, No, I have no power to love nor believe; and then Peter did ill to answer so, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Then, Paul to say, "We can do nothing but for the truth." Then, that martyr, that to them that said, "The Lord strengthen you;" Yes, saith he, the Lord doth. I know, if the Lord withdraw his Spirit, we are gone, as Adam; but is there not the immutable assistance of it? Is there not the promise, "I will never leave thee," though sometimes weaker, sometimes stronger?

4. This will make a Christian hide and not improve his talents; he has grace, but no power to put it forth. Then, suppose God gives power to see truth one day, I must not see it with this eye the next; but look up to Christ, and say, I can not see at all.

II. Causes of this.

1. In opposing the outward principle of life, or first principle, and this second, I must live on Christ; hence I must not, I have no power to act myself, in any measure, because all my strength is in him. When, if this were true, a man might argue, because all grace is originally in Christ, hence no grace in me, because all glory is in Christ originally; hence no glory shall be conveyed to me. No, this scripture reconciles these: "Because I live, therefore you shall live also." John xiv. 19. Because Christ is strong, hence he will make us strong in the inner man,

and not in the spirit only; because Christ is glorious, hence we are predestinated "to be made like unto him." Because all sap lies in the root, to say, therefore, there is no sap or power in the branch to fructify, this is false.

2. The hypocritical activity of false professors, who, having no spring to feed their wells, no Christ, nor bucket to draw from him, hence are their own men, and set up for themselves, till they turn bankrupts. And, now, because a Pharisee is so active as to go through sea and land to make a proselyte, therefore Paul has no activity of grace of Christ in him to go from land to sea to make Christians.

3. Sloth. A man sets upon a duty; and, now, because he can not do it easily nor quickly, he can not do it at all. A man would have grace active without means; and God will not help in that way; and hence many Christians can not cleave to Christ by love or desire; no, so long as they pore upon their wants, no encouragement, but turn the mind, and consider well of the love and glory of Christ, then with Paul, (2 Cor. v. 14,) "Christ's love constraineth."

4. Judging that to be the power of grace at all times, which is at sometimes; a man has given special occasion for the Lord to leave him, as the camp in Joshua's time, (Josh. vii.,) and he thinks there is no more power at any time in any man. For then a man sees all the world can not help, when if Achan were removed, the Spirit of the Lord would return again.

5. That hereby a man may have his sins without trouble; for a man has been troubled, and can not get power, now he hears there is no such power to be expected, he looks to Christ, and if power come, well, if not, saith he, it is not my fault.

Thirdly. Those that deny the evidence of it, the evil of which apprehension I conceive to be no less than taking away that which is the chief, if not only difference between hypocrites and saints in virgin churches; for so it is made here. A man saith, I have Christ, and so have not they. I ask, Where is the Spirit? You have the deed, where is the seal? You have the testator, where is the executor, the spirit in you? Yes, I have it; it has witnessed Christ is mine.

Ans. It has witnessed, but what has it wrought? Where is the power of his death killing thy lusts? Where is the life of the Spirit of Jesus in you? Where is the oil in your vessel? Truly, I look for the bridegroom, but I regard not that, neither are others to regard it in way of evidence. Then, I say, the chief evidence is destroyed in the churches. I have known many that had assurances, yet never saw them prove right, till it

witnessed this was here. What should be the causes of this, and that men should make blusters in the churches because of this, as though it was building on works? In several men they are several.

1. An aptness in men's hearts to outrun the truth, and to fall from one extreme to another. Many men there be that fall short of Christ, and the grace of God in and from him; and, from their loose, profane life, fall to duties, and imitate God's people; and then, when they have got credit with good people, they judge well of them. And having made their peace hereby with conscience, and not with God, the Judge, never look after the saving knowledge of, and fellowship with, and life from, the Lord Jesus. Now, because men rest on this, these duties are no evidence; hence none are at all. The Corinthians first mourned not for the incestuous person; and, when cast out, wanted pity toward him. Calvin preached against holidays, hence intrenched upon the Lord's day. Some of the separation see many churches where they have become corrupt, hence make them all no churches. A man is apt to think, Because I have rested on myself, and found those signs which now are not sound, hence others do so too. And I believe divers books have occasioned it, which give signs that will not hold without a fuller explication of them.

2. The apostasy of eminent professors, who have been deceived in their evidencing thus. And truly it would make one think the honesty of the world is but a fashion, and no evidence of any good estate; hence men say you have joy, so had the stony ground; you are blameless and strict, so was Paul a Pharisee; and Satan hereby shakes many a soul. Hence the apostle comes in, (Heb. vi. 9,) and speaks of better things, and things that accompany salvation, and these should you follow. Hymeneus and Philetus fell both. 2 Tim. ii. 18–21. Yet purge yourselves, and you shall be vessels of honor for the Master's use.

3. Corrupt experience. It may be a man walks so loosely, without fear, or life, or love, that the Lord leaves him, and he can see no clear thorough work; sometimes has pangs and then hopes; sometime dead, then doubts. Hence, being vexed here, and finding no peace, if he find it any other way than this, there he rests. As it is observed with men, clothes hide their shame: but when dead, their face is also covered, all their glory being then gone. So some glory of God appears here; but when Christians are dead, they cover this; I will look no more to it, all the glory of it is now gone, and here lies a deceit to love Christ for freeing me from this way of evidencing.

4. A heart that never felt the bitterness and bondage of sin

as the greatest evil. Take a man full of fears of wrath; O, now assurance is his chiefest good, and he will account it so; but if ever God did load the soul with sin, *e contra*, you will account of deliverance from this highly; nay, a promise he will do, it is sweet; but to be feeling those sinews of sin crack, O, it is the joy of heaven that now fills that heart! The greatest evil in God's eyes is sin; the greatest good we have is redemption from it by a mighty hand. Now, not so much as to account of this highly, this is hard. Thus I have left these things to be thought of; I can not avoid it, it lies in my text; and the rather, because of that scripture abused, "If any say, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not," i. e., by signs; or, in a wilderness, i. e., in a sorrowful estate; or, in the privy chambers in frames of heart, believe it not neither. Take heed you do not wrest scriptures thus. It is said, "Esau hated Jacob for the blessing." Gen. xxvii. 41. This Spirit of grace is the blessing which saints account as the evidence of the dearest love; to separate from churches, from messengers of God, for this will yield you sorrow enough one day. I tell you, you shall not be found "fighters against men, but against God," and the Spirit of his grace, and the life of him who lives in heaven for us. Take heed you forget not oil in your vessels.

Fourthly. Those that acknowledge in their judgments all these things, but deny it in their lives; regard not the having this principle of life, and have peace in this, from a double ground.

1. By a fruitless faith, which hangs on Christ; but never receives nor brings in this principle, as those, John ii. 24, 25; and hence, though they receive none, yet they hang on him. And so their faith, like a bucket without a bottom, draws up nothing.

2. A form of godliness before men. If a man should neither speak well, nor pray, etc., he would have no love, no respect, no receiving into church; but he can not do it with life, and hence a form contents him, and there rests. So that now, if conscience troubles, and says, Those duties are done with no life of Christ and Spirit, he answers, Yet I go to Christ. If this be all, why do you not cast off your form? O, then, I should have no love from men! O, this life of Christ is not prized, till, with these virgins, they feel the want of it, and it is too late, know this will be your woe at last. Look upon thy dead soul; all the glory is gone; and wait upon the word, that the Lord may make thee live. Could you know this well of water and ask, he would give it you. O, beg for it, then, as for your life. Only seek it in Christ, and so from Christ.

Section IV.

Use 4. *Of Trial.* We live in a country which hath goodly trappings, rich hangings, glorious profession, burning lamps; and hence many think themselves rich, when, indeed, poor; many look to meet the bridegroom, when, indeed, they shall be shut out from the fellowship of the bridegroom. How shall I know that? That all my sorrows, prayers, reformation, profession, is but a paint, an appearance, a fashion, a church craft, which will stand me in no stead when the Lord shall appear, who shall judge the secrets of all hearts, by the word you hear this day; try it, therefore, by this rule, does it come from a principle of life or no? Your lamp burns, but look what is in your vessel that feeds this flame. That, as our divines speak, how the disciples could do greater works than Christ, and others wrought miracles besides Christ; how, then, do they prove that he is Christ? It is answered, in all his miraculous works we are to consider not only *quid fecit*, i. e., what he did, but *qua virtute fecit*, from what power he did. The apostles and others did miracles, but it was *aliena virtute;* Christ did them, but it was *propria virtute.* So many an unsound heart, he may do greater works than saints, and his lamp burn brighter. Therefore, in this case, we are not to look so much to what is done, as from what power and principle it is done; for therein the best hypocrite ever fails. We shall ever observe in some beasts there are *umbræ rationis*, yet there is no rational soul, nor any wise man will believe that their acts proceed from such a principle; so there are shadows of the power of grace in a carnal heart, and yet no judicious Christian will say they come from an inward soul or principle of life. Consider, therefore, whether there is this principle or no; you see there is profession, you have a name to live in the judgment of all the church, but search your hearts, and see from what principle it proceeds; for, if this be wanting, all is nothing. As he that had beer given him, when milk and wine and sugar were put into it to mend it, said, the wine is good, and the milk is good, but the beer is bad; so profession, affection is good, but the heart, the man, is bad; (Jer. ii. 22,) "Though thou wash thee with nitre, thy sin is marked before the Lord." And that the trial may be full and fair, I shall show negatively the several sorts of men that act not from an inward principle, yet carry it out as though the bitterness of death was past, and the bridegroom theirs.

1. When a man's principle is nothing but the power of created

nature expressing itself, and setting the best face forward, in the gilded rottenness of some moral performances, wherein a man saith he does what he can; for there is this principle in most of men, a desire to be saved; nature saith so; and according to the intention of this desire, so according men will do more or less; and hereupon soothe up themselves, when they see they can not do as others do, or as the Lord commands, I do as well as I can. Nay, when condemned by the word which meets them, I do as well as I can, I believe, I repent, I pray, I remember the word, I do as well as I can; and so they hope God accepts of that; and though I believe no man but may be hired to do more than he does, yet nature may do much. Hence I heard an Arminian once say, If faith will not work it, then set reason a-work, and we know how men have been kings and lords over their own passions by improving reason, and from some experience of the power of nature men have come to write large volumes in defence of it; and it is known the Arminians, though they ascribe somewhat to grace, and in words all to grace, yet, indeed, they lay the main stress of the work upon a man's own will, and the royalty and sovereignty of that liberty. But to leave them, and to come to ourselves, is it not a common thing for men to make lies their refuge, and to say, I was in a woful condition once, and never looked after God; but now I bless the Lord it is otherwise with me? How? Now I believe, repent, etc. And so I confess all I do is full of weaknesses, yet I do what I can; and thus they are like to men that have old garments new dressed, they have made them as good as they can; and like the young man, (Luke xviii. 21,) "All these things have I done from my youth; yet one thing was wanting, which was to forsake all, and so himself, that the disciples said, Who then can be saved? with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

You say you do as much as you can; I say do so, but it is impossible for man from any strength of man, and you have no more yet; (John i. 13,) "Born again, not of the will of man, but of God." There is in some men a birth, like to the new birth, which is of the will and power of man; but, O, this is not this inward principle which the almighty power of God creates; and therefore know it, if you get no other oil in your lamps, you shall never meet the bridegroom.

2. When a man's principle is the power of holy example, whereby many a one is drawn to do more than otherwise he would. Many men think for a while as that man spake; men talk of being worth thousands, I would fain see the men, minis-

ters preach and others speak well, we must do this and that, but I would fain see the men that do it. Now, it sometimes falls out that the Lord sets before men's eyes some pattern Christians; hereupon they think thus: Here are two contrary ways, they can not both lead to heaven, their way is better than mine, and doubtless leads to life; mine doth not, therefore let me live like them. And hence there shall not be any fast but they will be at it, not a sermon near but they will go wet and dry to hear it, nor any duty in family but they will imitate it, and hence read and learn, that they may be like them. No Christians in the country hated but they will love them, nor ceremonies cast off but they will abhor them; and hence they reflect upon their patterns, and think their estate safe, because they are as good as a Christian's outside. And hence, like some dead cattle, there is nothing good but their skin, so there is nothing good in these but their imitating outside. Thus it was with Joash while Jehojada lived. 2 Chron. xxiv. Hence he fell like ivy with the oak, when God cut him down. Thus it was with these five foolish virgins; a man may follow good examples, but not rest in bare imitation of them. And hence a blessed man is described (Ps. i.) negatively, from not imitating the wicked, not from imitating the good; because good men may be in many things ill examples, and it ever proves so in these men that have no more than this principle; hence, if they be loose in their tongues, or on the Sabbath, their plea is, they are like unto them. And hence come all your acquired excellencies; a man is an imitating creature, led by example, and a carnal man, out of the heart of hypocrisy in himself, will imitate the divine nature which is in another; and hence men not only take up such practices, but such opinions only, because such and such are of that mind. And men change practices and opinions as examples do change; in Joshua's time, great reformation; he no sooner died, but all fell off again; then they were for purity of ordinances and God's worship, now they serve Baalim. O, consider, here in an outward, but no inward principle.

3. Those whose principle is nothing but external applause and praise of men, and this will carry a man beyond all the best examples; nay, sometime to be singular and a man alone; a Pharisee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end, while simplicity walks through the town unseen. Hence a man will sometimes covertly commend himself, and myself ever comes in, and tells you a long story of conversion, and a hundred to one if some lie or other slip not out with it. Why, the secret meaning is, I pray admire me; hence complain of wants and weaknesses;

pray, think what a broken-hearted Christian I am; and hence, if comforted, they complain, if not, they will comfort themselves; hence many lift up eyes and hands, and fetch deep sighs in prayer, remember and note sermons, look now what a gift I have; hence, if you come to their company, they will have so many good words as may make you think well of them, and then the market is almost done with them; hence men forsake their friends, and trample under foot the scorns of the world, they have credit elsewhere. To maintain their interest in the love of godly men they will suffer much; hence men in the ministry pray for grace to beautify and perfect their parts, that so they may preach, and convert, and have credit; hence men meditate new light, and profess deep things that few know, that men may worship the rising sun; hence the Lord is neglected secretly, yet honored openly, because there is no wind in their chambers to blow their sails, and, therefore, there they stand still; hence many men keep their profession when they lose their affection, they have by the one a name to live, and that is enough, though their hearts be dead; and hence so long as you love or commend them, so long they love you, but if not, they will forsake you; they were warm only by another's fire, and hence, having no principle of life within, soon grow dead. This is the water that turns a Pharisee's mill, and the Lord passeth a heavy doom, "You have your reward." I have wondered that the opinion of men, nay, dream of men's thoughts, should act men; only it is a curse of God, that, when men despise his honor, the greatest good, they shall be fed with the basest good.

4. Those whose principle is nothing else but their own gain of outward blessings. Many there be that make not their honor so much as their bellies their gods, and they rule them, (Phil. iii. 19;) hence the shopkeeper will give good words when he sells his commodity, he should lose much of his custom else; and hence the minister preacheth conscionably that his gain may come in. 1 Thess. ii. 4, 5. Hence people would be as good as the best, they can not get a lot in all the country else. Hence a man is sometime content to forsake all for Christ, that he may make a booty of Christ, as Judas did. Hence, when Christ feeds them with loaves, then the people will make him a king, (John vi.,) though afterward they cry, Crucify him. So men deal with Christ as the soldiers did that caught him, that they might strip him of his garments. And hence many men, if they see sorrows and wants attending them, if they attend on Christ, forsake him. Look upon our own land; many, so long as they could enjoy Christ with fair weather, cry out of ceremonies, and profaning of Sabbath

yet this not being to be had, creep to them, and read the book for profaning thereof. Many shadows have been seen since our sun hath risen here, and this way they looked; but viewing other men's wants, and fearing their own losses, and conceiving they may meet with Massah in this wilderness, refuse to follow. And lest this should seem to be the cause, cry out, we are separatists, or strongly possess themselves against all relations; there is no living at all here.

Look but at home; how many doves (that prove but ravens, and live on the prey) come hither to our windows, and have followed Christ to this world's end; when he fed them with loaves, they made him their king; but now he hath taken away what once they desired, because there is better bread to be labored for; now they forsake him, and live on the spoil. This is no inward principle. And hence, when men's expenses for Christ exceed their receipts from Christ, they cease spending, and fall in the highway to begging at the door of the world.

5. Those whose principle is nothing else but the strength of natural conscience, which will set men a-doing, when they have neither praise from men nor gain from Christ for their labor. For the Lord deals with some men as the Romans did with some of their prisoners; they would chain a prisoner and his keeper together, and let them go up and down; so God chains many a poor prisoner of hell and his conscience together, and lets them go together. And hence many a man keeps peace with his conscience, and can not give it the slip for all the world heaped up with gold, as Balaam said.

Now, there are two things in a natural conscience. Rom. ii. 15.

1. To accuse; hence a man dares not omit prayer, dares not commit a sin he has a mind to; conscience would then roar. Hence many keep constantly set duties in private, and tremble at small sins; not because they take any delight in the one, or are weary of the other, but because they are ever under the eye of this judge.

2. To excuse, and to give much sweetness when a man follows the dictates thereof; hence a man, though carnal, will die for his religion, and that with some cheerfulness, because conscience cheers within, and sings him asleep in trouble. And hence a man will cry out of all the glorious hypocrisies of men, because to walk according to conscience is sweeter to him. And hence a man comforts himself, It is my conscience; (Mark xii. 33,) to love God "is better than burnt-offerings." Hence a man will profit exceedingly in what he holds, (Gal. i. 14,) be-

cause zealous for it for conscience; and yet this is but a principle of nature, not an inward principle of life, whose property is to seek the subversion of corrupt nature, as natural conscience seeks the garnishing of it and the actions thereof.

6. Those whose principle is the fear of death and hell; raised not so much by the power of conscience as by the power of the Word. And hence come complaints about a man's estate; that a man can have no rest by all duties that he has done, or doth. Hence following of the means, running to the best ministry, mourning and lamenting and confessing sin; (Matt. iii. 7,) "O generation of vipers," etc. And hence prizing of favor and comfort. Ps. lxxviii. 34, 35. Hence many do take this for their conversion, and say, I heard such a minister at such a time, and then I cried out I was damned, and thought I saw the devil; yea, and to hell you may for all this, if no other principle. Indeed, there is this fear in the elect, but drives them to the ark, as Noah; but those, when their fear is over, they fall to fight against the Lord.

7. Those whose principle is nothing else but the immediate actings of the Spirit of God upon them. For sometime the Spirit of God comes upon men as light shines on the mud wall, yet dwells not there as in the sun. And hence many speak, pray, prophesy admirably, as Balaam. Num. xxiv. 3, 4. Many men, like carters, bring others' goods that are not possessors of them. Now, these are, 1. External enlargements. And hence a man doth many things which he has no inward power to perform; the Spirit is there assisting; hence he can not do so at another time, but it is the Spirit only assisting. And hence a man may have abundance of knowledge, and he not affected with it; he may live and pray with applause of men, others wish they were like him, yet live without love, and speak without feeling, and do without life; hence men leave themselves here. 2. Internal pangs. The Spirit of God begets some inward grief, especially when outward evils press, then inward flashes and desires, but they are soon done. There is no spring, no principle within. What the difference is between saints' unevenness and this inconstancy you shall hear hereafter; yet these are wrestlings of spirit not yet conquering, and hence it possesses not the soul.

8. When men's principle is nothing else but common gifts, which are inward, and abiding long in the soul. That a man now thinks he has grace, and sure signs of the Lord's love, and here is fastened. When there be two things wherein it appears there is no inward principle: 1. These gifts ever puff up, and

make a man something in his own eyes, as the Corinthian knowledge did. And many a private man thinks himself fit to be a minister, many a minister better than all the parish besides; when Paul was the least of all the saints. And hence commonly they degenerate to pride and form. 2. These keep men strangers to Christ and the life of faith; they have these affections, yet, ignorant of Christ, take these as signs of his love, and live without him. And this is, indeed, the inner principle which all the wicked in the world want; there is in true grace an infinite circle. A man by thirsting receives, and receiving, thirsts for more. But hence the Spirit is not poured out abundantly on churches, because men shut it out by shutting in and contenting themselves with their common graces and gifts. Matt. vii. 29. Examine if it be thus. If so, —

1. You can not come to the Lord; (John v. 44,) "How can ye believe?"

2. Nor to receive any thing from the Lord if you do, (James iv. 3,) "when you ask to spend it on your lust," when that carries you.

3. This pulls down the kingdom of the Lord Jesus when other things rule us, and not himself alone.

4. Satan will have this against you, as against Job, "You serve not the Lord for nought." To what purpose are your new moons, church reformations, if it be thus? Now, because it hath been replied to what was formerly said, that Christ was the vessel, not our souls, I shall, therefore, confirm the latter to be the truth by these reasons: —

1. Mystical places of Scripture are to be interpreted by plain. Now, though Christ may be the antitype of these vessels of the temple, yet he is not plainly said to be a vessel; but souls are called so. Rom. ix. 23; 2 Cor. iv. 7; Acts ix. 15. "Paul is a chosen vessel." 1 Thess. iv. 4, "We are to possess our vessels in holiness." 2 Tim. ii. 20, "Vessels of honor."

2. The Spirit is not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a fountain; hence, (John iii. 34,) "Christ hath received the Spirit without measure."

3. The foolish virgins had vessels, because it is said, "They took their lamps, but no oil with them." Their folly was not in not providing vessels. Hence the foolish virgins did not afterward beg their vessels, but their oil.

4. The wisdom of the wise did appear in that they did provide oil for their vessels. If, therefore, the vessel be Christ, therein lies the wisdom of the wise, that they got the Spirit to put into Christ, and the folly of the foolish, they got not the

Spirit to put into him. Or the one got Christ Jesus full of the Spirit, the other, Christ Jesus void of it. When whoever hath Christ must have in him the fullness of the Spirit also.

5. The other interpretation crosseth the main scope of this part of the parable, which is to show the difference between the virgins. All professed Christ, went to meet the bridegroom; but here was the difference, they never looked for to get the Spirit in them. And this is most suitable to men raised out of the dregs of Popery, where works being abolished, Christ is owned, and therein do well, but herein fail.

Thus you have heard the use of trial negatively. What this inward principle is affirmatively you have generally heard, and shall more particularly in the other two doctrines. Only this I shall add, it consists of two parts:—

1. Our life in Christ by faith.

2. Christ's life in us by his Spirit. Faith empties the soul, and looks upon it as dead, and sees its life laid up in Christ; and hence forsakes itself, and embraces the Lord of glory. *Secondly.* The Spirit comes and possesseth a forsaken, empty house, and there lives and dwells. Both these the apostle mentions. Gal. ii. 20; Eph. iii. 17; John xv. 4. As two married together, their souls live not where they are, but in each other. The one cares not how to please herself, but her husband; and *e contra.* So that lest any weak soul should be discouraged, that thinks there is no principle of life, because such a blind, empty, dead heart, wandering from God, etc. Nay, when the Lord quickens it, O, it is lost again. Nay, when quickened, O, then, when it comes to, it is so feeble! I tell you it must be so. This makes you lay up your life in him; this death is your life. And lest any false heart should be here deceived that saith he has Christ, "If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his." The saints have this sometime, their temple is filled with glory; and for their general course they are admirers of the Lord Jesus, and account his life to be life, and all their life beside to be continual death. There is not any grace but they say, O that I had it!

Section V.

Use 5. *Of Exhort.* To every man, as ever you look to be with Christ Jesus another day, get this oil in your vessels. The Lord doth, in this parable, set before your eyes the estate of the purest virgin churches and professors in the world, and it is his infinite love to tell us beforehand, before the time be past, to tell us that many of these shall be shut out from the presence of the Lord

Jesus, whom themselves and others think shall not; and yet this love would be but little, unless the Lord had made known the cause or defect in not getting oil to their vessel. O, consider, therefore, here you are like to fail; you that have lamps before the cry and bridegroom comes, acknowledge Christ's love, and be overcome by it to get oil in your vessels. When Rahab knew that the Lord would destroy all Jericho, now she lays about her to preserve her life. What is the means? To tie the scarlet thread at the window. O, she would be sure to get and keep that there. You know the Lord Jesus will come and discover the unsound profession, and destroy the glory of the world and churches, too. It may be ye have had sore fears, What if he should cut me off, and cast me out, as possibly he may! And I may as well as eminent professors. I tell you none ever perished but because of this. How just had Rahab's judgment been if she had refused to get her scarlet thread there, and yours if now ye get not your oil in your vessel? How many are there that have lived fairly and died quietly, and, when they are dead, and knock, the door is shut, that then wring their hands; O, had I but known of this! I would have spent my care, and strength, and tears, and thoughts, how to have filled my vessel; but I knew it not. This time will shortly come; and if you know it now, and do not set upon it, what a cut will this be! As, therefore, the apostle exhorts, (Heb. iv. 1,) "Having a promise of entering into rest, fear lest you fall short of it." I say so much more here, knowing how only you shall enter into Christ's rest, fear lest you fall short of this; I hope I shall not, I thank God my course is blameless, spotless; I have forsaken the sins of places and pollutions of ordinances; so these were virgins also. O, but my lamp burns as bright as any man's, I know; so did the foolish virgins'. O, but they all think well of me; so were these thought of, till the Lord said, "I know you not." O, but I look to Christ, to meet with him, and salvation from him; so did these, and yet were shut out from Christ. If the Lord should have said, it was because they had not wealth enough, nor world enough, every man would not have been wanting here, but would have striven to have got enough of that, though it were not to be had; but there is enough in Christ to enrich you, who has the Spirit without measure to do it. The Spirit may breathe now.

Means 1. Labor to feel and mourn under thy whole corrupt principles that have acted thee hitherto; for many men are sensible sometimes of some particular acts and jarrings of their hearts and life with the rule, and then they seek forgiveness of

and grace against them, and then they hope all is well; then they do many things and hear John gladly, and in plainness and integrity of their hearts think that all is well. But still they fall short of a principle of life, because they never felt a whole corrupt principle, and how in every thing it crosseth God, not only in the corrupt, but most glorious actions. For all men naturally turn from being open to secret enemies, and from being secret to be subtle enemies, and to undermine the Lord in all they do. Now, many see it, but not the evil of it, nor mourn under it. Hence, the Lord never sends another Spirit, because they have not the spirit of heaviness for want of it. But when a man sees that in every thing he is carried and acted by a principle of bitterness against the Lord, and lives without the Spirit of the Lord to act him, the Lord is not far from that soul when he feels this, and mourns before the Lord because of this, and the want of that. 1 Kings viii. 38. So Christ said, "Because I said, I go away, sorrow has filled your hearts." John xvi. 6, 7. This is the very reason why saints have the Comforter, his absence fills their hearts with sorrow; because when he is gone, O, the straitness, vileness of a corrupt heart! You say it may be. If this be not a right principle, what is? *Ans.* To undermine all false works. O, therefore, feel this plague! If ever God works this grace, feel you must the want of it, and if you do mourn, then you are under it. And, O, mourn, 1. By considering the evil of it; you can mourn after a dead father, and shall you not over a dead heart? 2. To think there should be so much Spirit in Christ, and not a drop for me. Is he so angry with me? See, therefore, I pray you, that you are led by ill principles, or false principles. I pray, but self-love sets me a-work; I profess, but praise of men acts me; I observe duties in secret, but natural conscience only carries me. No surer sign of ruin than for the Lord to hide these things from you; nor of love than when he shows this, and gives you not only sense of some one act, but a spirit of heaviness under this. This empties the vessel, and so makes us vessels of honor. Do not, therefore, set thyself so much to do, as to see where thy evil principle is in all thou dost.

Means 2. Repair now to the fountain of life, for a principle of life from him, and fetch it from him.

Quest. What is that, and how shall I fetch it from him?

Ans. 1. It is not a man's own striving; a man may imitate nature, but can not make nature. All the world can not make one poor fly. And as it is *artis celare artem*, so when he hath done he may deceive himself and others, but nothing else.

"Born not of the will of man." A man is in great distress of conscience for sin past, fear of death for time to come, and now he comes just as far as a devil; then prays, Lord, save me, and now comes as far as nature can carry him, and, therefore, is eased, and now he hath Satan's black seal upon him, and self-flattery hath carried him on. The fountain of life is not here.

2. It is not the law; it convinceth one, and he complains; it condemns another, and he cries out; it irritates another, and he falls to do what he can; but the law can not give life. Gal. iii. 21.

3. It is not bare ordinances, which are of themselves but husks, and shells, and empty pipes. Witness the cries of many a man Sabbath after Sabbath, no life, and that for a long time; nay, he grows worse.

4. It is not God, simply considered. He is, indeed, the fountain of life, but sin has sealed that fountain; hence many a one goes to him, and departs from him with frowns.

5. Where is life, then? In Christ. I know he is Lord and Prince of life. Yet consider, as God man, no life is in him for you, as to be communicated to you. Where then? It is in the blood and death of the Lord of life. You are ready to undervalue this life. O, consider what it must cost the Son of God, and where it must lie; (Heb. ix. 14,) "If bulls' and goats' blood washed the flesh, much more this blood," etc. Many a man feels a blind, dead heart, and all duties dead; and hence uses many persuasions to himself, yet they continue so still, because he never looks to this blood. There is this excellency in Christ's blood, not only to cleanse from guilt and power of sin, but from dead works, and none else can. Now, therefore, repair hither for it; know what your lives will and must cost.

Now, how shall this be done?

Ans. 1. Prize this blood, and satisfy thy soul with it, choose it, and rest in it, in the Lord himself as sufficient; (John vi. 53,) "Except ye eat and drink," etc.: many account it a common thing; you receive it not then, but trample it under your feet; many esteem of it, but they feel not themselves with it, nor quiet their hearts with life there first; and hence it falls out thus.

2. Keep this rule, Content not thyself with that measure which thou hast from Christ, but be thankful for it, and falling short, call ever for more; but satiate thyself with that which is in Christ.

If thou canst not do this, if it is beyond thy strength, then consider Christ has words of life. John vi. O, beg for that, and for those words, "Hear what the Lord will say." Ps. li. 8. You

can not see nor come to Christ; then, "Hear and your souls shall live." Who knows what the Lord may do? It is not possible for man to do it, but the Lord Jesus may and can.

O, then, you that have this principle, let all your actions issue and spring from hence. As Paul exhorted Timothy, "Stir up that gift that is in thee." "Up, Deborah, up. Awake, harp and lute," saith David. / Do not say, I can do nothing, and so the Lord must do all; do not say, I have a dead heart, and can do nothing, but stir it up. It was the Lord's complaint; (Is. lxiv. 7,) "None took hold of the Lord, nor stirred up himself" to that end. It may be some of you have some strength. O, put it forth. (I know all strength is from Christ, but there is a permanent strength in you.) You are not dead to act; you wrong the Lord and his grace if you think so. As it is a heavy sin to shut up and imprison natural truth, (Rom. i. 18,) so much more the power of grace. Others have lost it; O, recover it. And hence Paul prays for this earnestly; (Eph. iii. 15,) "The Lord strengthen you with might in the inner man." And, therefore, put this forth to act, and be sure you act only from the Spirit of grace.

Quest. How shall I do this?

Ans. 1. Set the Lord Jesus in all his glory before you. There is that excellency of the knowledge of Christ's person, that it makes us be and live like him, and according to the propinquity of our souls and eyes to Christ, so we are like him. As it is with the sun, when it is gone from the earth, there are not so much as leaves on the trees, yet when it returns, the trees bring forth fruit. Or as it is in heaven, (1 John iii. 2,) so in this life, when we see him in a glass. 1 Cor. iii. 18. That look as it is with an ambitious man, when he is in the presence of men he will manifest all his excellency; nothing shall be done to gain discredit. So if the Lord and his life be your excellency, when you see Christ you will approve yourselves to him. See him, therefore, beholding and accepting; and that grace you would put forth, see it in him; it is strange to see what a stream of spirit comes sometimes this way.

2. Keep the remembrance of the exceeding greatness of his love fresh in your minds, in that "he has quickened you," (Eph. ii. 4, 5;) and that this life was by his death. All the flowers of the field cast their savor but for a time, and then away with them; but Christ's love and Christ's death do usually always breathe a savor of life to a sincere heart that never knew what the sting of death meant. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Christ loves Christians, because he dies that we should live. But how? Because we thus judged. God has made man an agent by counsel. Now, some

Christians go to the Lord to help them, but set not prayer of faith a-work, and hence have no water of life. Some do, but use not other means to set the understanding (the mind of faith) on work, to quicken it up to act, and so would have life brought in, but not by the right door; an empty vessel will not be full of this water till now that the mouth of the understanding is open. Now, many things are to be considered to act every grace, as God's command and promise, etc. But this is that which in the general quickens; O, Christ's love, which constrains the soul to live to him. According as a man thus receives from Christ, so he returns to him. As it is observed, one sign that when a people visit not their minister they receive no good; so here. That is a sign of a decaying Christian, for usually they that get good by Christ, can not, by their good will, stay away from Christ. So, then, the soul will return in all fruitful obedience to the Lord, when he receives the sweet of the love of the Lord. The Lord doth me good, methinks, and hence he follows the Lord. Satan hence prevails with the heart, because of its external objects, and a party within; so here Christ prevails, because there is a party within, when external objects are propounded. Let a man have life; if he have no food he will never live. If bread be before him, and he feed not on it, and that abundantly, he will never have strength; so this love of Christ in us is life in us, and food for us.

3. Famish the contrary principle, the strength whereof is by sucking in the sweet, and receiving in carnal content from the creature; (Rom. xiii. 14,) "Put on the Lord Jesus," his Spirit, his righteousness, his life, his graces; "make no provision for the flesh." Many Christians look up to Christ in all means, but can do nothing, because they have some delight either in lawful or unlawful things, that lie between them and Christ. Hence that grows strong, the other feeble.

4. Die to all self-confidence in grace received, or self-contentment with any measure of it; for thereby you stop the Spirit; for we of ourselves can not think a good thought. Therefore, be strong in Christ, and hence, Eph. vi. 10–12. A man is apt to fall to a double extreme, to be strong in the Lord without putting on graces; and to trust to them without being strong in him. Corn must die before it lives; so must you; and rest not content with the measure received, but look for more, and hence be thankful, and say, It is not I, but Christ; yet look for more.

5. If no means come to give strength, consider sadly if you have not broken covenant with God, as in Samson's case. God was in covenant with him, but he had broken it on his part;

hence his strength was gone. I know no place that breeds men of larger covenants than this place, by sea and land, personal, and especially church covenants. Now, thy strength is gone. Dost thou not live in breach of covenant? Not only it is broken, but you live in it. You covenant to cleave to the Lord, or if you depart, to return soon again, but you lie in your falls. Nay, your covenant and returning heals your horror only, not your sin. You covenant to love brethren dearly, but a little offence one gives, or hopes of a bigger lot, will tempt thy heart to leave them to their own shifts. You covenant to submit to officers in the Lord, but some take liberty to speak what they will, and others do what they list. To watch over your brethren, to put life in them, but you grow a stranger, and it may be see them not once in a quarter, unless at church. But can it be said they are any better for thee? O, your sins are double, and hence your plagues of heart are worse now, more hard to be wrought upon, and hence sin and Satan lead you. Ps. lxxviii. 57, 60, 61. O, consider this sin, the strength of God is taken as captain of the camp, that when you cry, Lord, help me, there it is. But, alas! it is gone from you, and it is in Satan's hand, not only your strength, but God's strength, and the soul is taken captive. O, therefore, mourn for this, lest you mourn at last.

CHAPTER XX.

SHOWETH THAT THERE IS SUCH A FULLNESS OR MEASURE OF GRACE IN THE HEART OF BELIEVERS, WHICH THE MOST REFINED HYPOCRITES NEVER ARISE UNTO.

Section I.

Doct. 3. That there is a certain plenitude, fullness, or full measure of the Spirit of grace in the hearts of the faithful, which the most glorious, yet unsound professors of virgin churches want, and have not in their vessels, but fall short of.

Just as these foolish virgins, they had their lamps, a burning and shining profession. And had they no more? Yes, surely; for their lamp how could it burn but by means of some oil? They had their wick touched and dipped in oil, some lighter strokes and superficial impressions of the Spirit. They had not their vessels filled with oil; they had not this degree and full measure of the Spirit. This they fell short of, and herein appeared the difference. There are certain inward touches,

an inward lighter dye of God's Spirit, which serves to beget a most eminent profession before men, but never to make the soul sincere, indeed, before the eyes of God. That look, as some naturalists make three or four kinds of life, differing only as higher or lower degrees of life, though not of the same life; as plants have a vegetative life only to grow, but no sensitive to see; because their forms are more drowned in their matter; sensitive in beasts, yet not rational; rational in men, but not angelical, etc. So here, a greater degree of the Spirit's working makes a difference in kind between Christian and Christian. It is the Spirit that makes a man live; it is the same Spirit, by a greater stroke, makes a man live the life of God. Eph. iv. 18. Yet there are two kinds of lives, as far different as sensitive and vegetative; and though the rational has both, yet it is neither of both. So, though a saint lives the life of reason and morality, yet there is another life he has, which doth differ from these, of a high degree, and of another kind. I do not say, therefore, that a sincere soul only has a greater degree of the same grace, but that he is distinguished by a greater degree of grace and working of the Spirit of grace from an unsound heart. As a man may love another, but not with a conjugal love, here is now a degree of love, but not of the same love, for it is not a whit conjugal; it might, then, be sinful in some men; so it is here. A man that has filled his stomach with meat may have some desire after it, but not a hungry desire, not in that degree; hence not hungry at all. So "the sluggard desires and has not;" a carnal heart desires, and another desires the Lord Jesus; a carnal sluggish heart desires and has not, but another hungers and is filled; he has not any degree of the same hunger. It is, therefore, granted there are desires, and joys, and light, and growth in false hearts, but there is not that fullness of joy, that fullness of light, that fullness of the Spirit, which is in the faithful, and here they ever fall short. Yet note, —

1. There is not a perfect measure; nor the fullness that shall be when our souls shall be gathered to them that are made perfect.

2. Nor yet that there is that fullness the saints aim at; for it is the resurrection they aim at. Phil. iii. 12–14.

3. Nor yet a glutting fullness, that men have manna enough, and say, the main work is wrought, and that is enough; not such a fullness as satisfies their appetite from longing for more; but which satisfies and quiets their conscience in regard of the uprightness of their souls before the Lord.

Section II.

But, for the more full and clear explication of this point, I shall show you these three things:—

1. That hypocrites may have some inward touches of God's Spirit.

2. That the very reason of their falseness is, because they have no more than such touches or strokes.

3. That there is a fullness the saints come to which others want.

To be showed, 1. Positively; 2. Negatively.

I. That hypocrites may have not only outward shows, but some inward lighter strokes of God's Spirit; as,—

1. Of the Spirit restraining and confining, nay, benumbing of corruption, as Paul was blameless; nay, he had no mind nor will to many sins; nay, did not think he had any living contempt and enmity of God in his heart. Hence (Rom. vii. 9) it is said, "When the command came, sin revived." Was it not living before? Yes; but it was asleep, it was benumbed, like cold snakes, but not killed.

2. Of the Spirit preventing and exciting unto many, nay, to any duty of the law in general, and that sometime by fears of misery and terrors of the law, (Deut. v. 23;) and sometime by love and mercy morally affecting the heart; (Exod. xix. 4–6,) "You have heard what the Lord hath done. Will you now enter into covenant?" Yes; yet what is said of them? (Psalm lxxviii. 37,) "They were false in God's covenant."

3. There may be some operative and quickening grace of the gospel; (Heb. vi. 4,) "They were enlightened," etc.

4. There may be some edifying and coöperating gifts of law and gospel, whereby a man may not only be useful and helpful to some, but to the church of God, as those that did prophesy in Christ's name. And these may be so inward, that they think themselves clean and sincere; as Abimelech.

II. That the reason of their unsoundness is, because they have no more than lighter strokes of God's Spirit.

As I might show in all these, Paul is blameless, yet far enough from having sin mortified by Christ, and hence professeth, "We did serve divers lusts." Tit. iii. 3. The Israelites cry out, they "will do what God will have them." Yet, "O that there were such a heart!" Deut. v. 29. They in Heb. vi. "were enlightened and tasted," yet fell. He, therefore, adds, "We are persuaded (ver. 9) better things of you." They did "prophesy in Christ's name," (Matt. 7,) yet "depart from

me, ye workers of iniquity." But see it, more particularly, Mark xii. 33. Saith the scribe to him, "To love the Lord is better than all burnt-offerings." Some Jews did rest there, but neglected the inward work; but this man, the inward work was prized in his judgment; he had both profession and some affection. And was he now entered into the kingdom of God? No. Here was his wound; he fell short of it some degrees. Hence it is said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." So the Israelites, why did not they enter? Was not the land good? O, yes! That report the worst of the spies brought. But their hearts were not taken with the goodness of it, as Caleb's and Joshua's were. And hence they were shut out. Num. xiii. 27, and xiv. 7, 8, 24. So it is here. So an unsound heart may be enlightened, as it is there, Heb. vi. 4, 5. But there is a marvelous light which they never have; they have not such a degree. 1 Pet. ii. 9. And hence, (Deut. xxix. 2–4,) "The Lord has not given you eyes to see to this day." Did the Lord give them no eyes to see, no hearts to be affected with what they did see? Why came they, then, out of Egypt? Why did they sing when they saw Pharaoh drowned? Why, they had not such eyes and such hearts as Moses had, not unto that day.

So for turning to the Lord. Do not many unsound hearts turn over a new leaf? Do they not, not only outwardly, but inwardly too? Where is the flaw, then? In the degree; (Jer. iii. 10,) "Judah has not turned with her whole heart, but treacherously." So there may be some growth and life in false, unsound hearts, that may after away; but where is the wound? Look in the parable of the seed; some grew not at all; some did grow, but not having depth of earth, fell again. Others fell not in persecution, but there were the roots of thorns that choked the seed. The good ground's seed came to ripeness and fullness of fruit, though some in a greater degree than others; yet none at all (no ripe fruit) in the rest. Hence the Lord is said to "weigh the heart." Prov. xvi. 2. Men think they are humbled, and do believe, but God finds them too light, as "Belshazzar was weighed and found too light." And thus it will be seen at the last day, when Christ Jesus shall appear, that all the most glorious profession of many a man is, therefore, rejected, because found too light.

III. That there is a fullness which the saints have, and which others fall short of, which I shall show, —

1. Positively and affirmatively from what has been said, (Prov. xii. 26,) "The righteous is more excellent;" (John xiv. 17,) "Whom the world can not receive, because it knows him not."

There is that Spirit in saints which no unregenerate man knows, hence desires not. Because he dwells in you, he doth not only send some gifts, or work somewhat there, but he dwells there, he fills the heart. Hence the end of Christ's death is "to purchase to himself a peculiar people," (Tit. ii. 14,) of such a spirit, such a holiness that only themselves know. So it is that which all the prophets press to, to a higher pitch; and hence that charge of Joshua, xxii. 5. And it is a peculiar fruit of election, (Eph. i. 4,) 1. To be holy; 2. Before him; 3. In love.

2. Negatively. If there should not be such a distinguishing fullness, —

1. Then the whole ministry of Christ is in vain, and so destroyed; for what is the end of that, that God raiseth up any ministers in the church, but this, (Acts xxvi. 18,) "to turn men from darkness to light?" If this light was only that in Heb. vi. 4, then the end of the ministry was to work hypocrisy. "And from the power of Satan to God;" there the Lord leaves them not, "but that they may receive remission of sins," etc.

2. If there should not be this fullness, most of the promises should be destroyed, and God's faithfulness fail, and the saints be deceived. For promises are made to them that mourn, to them that hunger, to them that believe, etc. Now, many hypocrites mourn and desire, and the stony ground believed. Then it seems the promise is not true. Yes; and, therefore, there must be another kind of mourning, another and higher degree of the Spirit of faith, etc.; i. e., not of the same faith, but of another kind of faith.

3. If not, then all Christians endeavor after a higher measure of grace should be destroyed. For if any man only has Christ in his eye, that he may have him, I say that is sweet; but I say, you shall never have him, unless you receive him. O, but many receive him, as John ii. 23; yet Christ "committed not himself to them, for he saw what they were." Now, therefore, if you regard not the measure, i. e., such a kind of receiving of him, you will never seek for it, pray for it, nor learn to know it. And hence it is said, (Prov. xv. 24,) "The way of life is above to the righteous." If it were not above, of that height, he would never come over difficulties to it.

4. If not, there is no true hope that any man can have; but it is utterly destroyed; (1 John iii. 3,) "He that has this hope purgeth himself." I am as good as such a one. But, as Christ is pure, that is his copy and his pattern.

5. The very people of God are destroyed from having a being

in the world, if this measure makes not the difference. If it be replied, The Lord Jesus makes the difference, — it is very true, those that are in covenant, they have God to be their God; that makes one difference; but if there be not some peculiar workmanship of the Spirit in them, then, though they have God their God, yet the second part of the covenant is destroyed; i. e., they are not the Lord's peculiar people that have more than common wash-work. For we are not only the Lord's people by choice and purchase, but by new creation also. Is. lxiv. 7–9.

Section III.

Use 1. Hence we see the sight of no grace is no part of a Christian's grace and holiness. The five foolish virgins were not shut out because they did not see they had no oil, but because, when they did see it, (as the Lord will make you see it first or last,) they did not get such a measure and quantity of it as might fill their vessel. You may go down to hell with complaints, I have nothing, unless the eternal Spirit work something at last in you.

Use 2. Hence take heed of quenching and limiting the Spirit of God, when it is working upon and breathing in your hearts at any time, in any means. Because you may then fall short of this measure of it, and so be shut out at last. Look as it was with the Israelites, it is said of them, that "they could not drive out the Canaanites;" i. e., they would not, by reason of their sloth, and hence they were pricks, nay, snares to them. So the Lord begins to work strangely upon some men, but they are presently humble enough, and have comfort enough, and grace enough, and can not be better, and hence God makes their sins snares and thorns to their sorrow and ruin afterward. Nay, beloved, many a one will quench the Spirit. O, take heed of it! Thus, —

1. The Spirit not only convinceth, but humbles his heart, and shakes his spirit with fears of sin. Now, what should he do? He should welcome it, and say, O blessed Spirit, dost thou begin to cast me down to the dust for my sin, before I am cast to hell for my sin? What wilt thou have me to do? O, humble me more! Give me not only an act of heaviness, but a spirit of heaviness. As she said of affliction, "I pray God this plaster may never cease cleaving, till healed." Now, what do many men? Why, either game it, or work it, or sleep it away. The young man will not so soon lose all his mirth. The man that

has thought his estate good so long will not believe it is so with him now. Or, as Solomon speaks of God's hand, he grows weary of his chastisement, and so casts it off, and catcheth hold on Christ and comfort, and there stays before the Spirit has done it.

2. If they dare not shake it off thus till the Spirit easeth, then they satisfy themselves with some hopes the Lord gives, and some taste of his sweetness, before they are satisfied with it, as those did, Heb. vi. 4, 5. And hence, (Ps. xc. 14,) "O, satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." So satisfied as to live upon it. But they do not live upon it. As if you should ask a man, Could you be content to be made king and come from beggary? Yes; but he is left there, it is not so; and hence lives a beggar still. Men can not live without their lusts. Yet, saith Christ, "My flesh is meat indeed and drink indeed;" i. e., this gives real consolation, satisfaction indeed. And here many a Christian sinks, and goes up and down short of saving good.

3. Hence many walk in some desires which the Spirit has wrought; but to break through all difficulties, and follow the Lord indeed, and come to that they know they must, indeed, this they will not do; but depart from Christ sorrowful, and hope the Lord will accept of them; and hence the Lord complains (Mal. i. 8) of this generation that had desires in their flocks, but lame ones: "Will thy king accept this?" And so all their work is overly and superficial by stinting the Spirit. Thus far you shall go, but no farther. O beloved, this is the frame of a sincere heart, the Lord empties him, but he is never content that the work is done; but as his want made him beg before, so his taste makes him long more now, as Moses, to see more of the Lord's glory. As Paul, (Phil. iii. 12, 13,) O, therefore, when the Spirit comes, entreat it to go on and finish. And hence David begs, (Ps. cxix. 132,) "O the mercy that thou usest to show to them that love thy name!" Why so? O, David saw mercy to others, that sets God a-work to do somewhat for them, work somewhat in them; but it is not such mercy. O, beg for that mercy that humbled others, quickened others, that are now in glory; that, or no mercy, Lord.

Quest. How shall I know whether the work is overly?

Ans. 1. If sudden and violent, it is usually overly. A picture long a drawing is exact; another soon done is lightly done. A man has leopard spots, which in our garments can not be washed out easily. God's thorough work is seeking and searching.

Hence, violent, sudden sorrows and joys, and reformation, which all were in the stony ground proved unsound. Matt. xiii. 5.

2. God has thy time of trying thee. Matt. xiii. The seed was sown. Which now is good ground. Where is their fruit to be seen and ripeness of grace? Look upon persecution, it that doth not drive thee from Christ. If that doth not, see if the world doth not, which by a certain deceit and cozenage will befool you. I am persuaded, as Calvin is, that all the several trials of men are to show them known to themselves and the world, that they be but counterfeits, and to make saints known to themselves the better. As Saul, he has a temptation only of a command, when he had nothing to cause him to stoop but it, yet he fell there. So it is with many others that God doth much for; he tries them; (Rom. v. 5,) "Tribulation works trial, and that hope." Prov. xvi. 3. If you would know whether it will hold weight, the trial will tell you. Look you there, and in special, if it drives to prayer, fear not.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEREIN IS GIVEN A MORE LARGE AND FULL ACCOUNT OF THAT FULLNESS OF GRACE THAT IS IN BELIEVERS, AS TO THE SEVERAL PARTS THEREOF, AND HOW THE MOST GLORIOUS HYPOCRITES COME SHORT IN ALL.

Section I.

Use 3. Make, therefore, a narrow search whether you have this fullness of the Spirit or no.

Quest. What is this fullness?

Ans. When the Spirit comes in the room of those things which a man is full of now. For fullness or filling implies emptiness and the removal of that.

Now, there are six things every man is full of: —

1. Sin; 2. Darkness; 3. Unbelief; 4. Satan; 5. Self; 6. World.

So there is answerably in every saint, —

1. A fullness of humiliation for sin.

2. A fullness of illumination and revelation in the room of darkness.

3. A fullness of faith, in the room of unbelief.

4. A fullness of the Spirit itself, in the room of Satan.

5. A fullness of sanctification in acting for God as their last end, in the room of self-seeking.

6. A fullness of glory and consolation, instead of the world.

I. Fullness of humiliation under sin, opposite to fullness of sin.

For every hypocritical heart has commonly some humiliation and casting down, which is the first principle of all his profession, and hence can tell you of his miserable estate that once he lived in, and for which he was troubled, but it was never deep enough. For as there was before his terrifying, a full power, a fullness of the dominion of sin, his humiliation for sin never reached, never came to that fullness or measure, so as to deliver the soul from that. For I do not account that true humiliation whereby a man's heart is rent, troubled, and tormented with sin, but whereby it is rent from sin; not from the being, but from the power; not from the bondage of some, but yet from the power of all. For if rending with sin should be humiliation, then the devils should be more humbled than any. Then also a man may have too much of humiliation, and of God's Spirit. If rending from the being of all sin should be humiliation, then no man living should be sincerely humbled; unless we dream of an estate of perfection before it comes, and of the day of triumph in the time of warfare. If rending from the bondage of some sins should be humiliation, then a man might be truly humbled for sin, and yet under the power of it. And, therefore, look as in every one the Lord humbles, there was once a fullness of the reign and power of sin in the full strength of it; so that full measure of humiliation which the Lord works in his, it ever comes to that hight, as to break that power down, Ehud-like, it not only wounds the flesh, but leaves the dagger in the heart of this tyrant; (2 Cor. x. 5,) "The weapons of our warfare are mighty to cast down every thing that exalts itself."

If I should leave this point thus, I should but leave you as doubtful as you came, and so in the dark; therefore, for the better clearing of this point, let me explain five things to you, the scope of which is to show you what I mean by sin and the power of it, and that humiliation that removes it.

I. That besides the outward acts of sin, and inward lusts and breathings of sin, and the spiritual plagues with which God strikes men for sin, as blindness, hardness of heart, there is in every man living another sin, commonly called the sin of nature, (as in the serpents, besides the spitting of poison, their nature is poisonous,) which sin is generally believed and confessed, but felt by few. This is called in Scripture by the name of flesh; (John

iii. 3,) "The law of the members, the old man;" for, as in men, there are actions, breathings, and the man himself; so here; which sin of nature is the deordination of the whole man, or a corrupt bent and set of the whole man against God; and it expresseth itself in two particulars: 1. In a constant departing from God in every action, civil and moral; like a man set out of his way, every step he goes is out; or like a clock out of frame, every stroke is false; (Ps. lviii. 3,) "The wicked go astray from the very womb." 2. In fierce, invincible resisting and contradicting of God, when he has overtaken the soul to draw it home, and turn it back. Rom. viii. 7. We account it a doleful thing for Christ to bid the soul depart at the last day; that woe is passed upon all the sons of men by this sin now, only with this difference: 1. They are forced to depart then, men willingly depart now, and hasten away in every thing from God as fast as they can. 2. They depart into fire, these to broken cisterns of creatures. I do, 3. Believe they would not resist the Lord, if he should come to save them from separation then from him; this makes nature resist him now.

II. That this sin of nature is most properly only the reigning sin. The text is evident for it; (Rom. vi. 12,) "Let not sin reign, to obey it in the lusts thereof." There is, 1. Obedience, i. e., the outward acts; 2. Lusts, the inward breathings; 3. Sin itself, where those lusts are seated. It has been a question what a man's reigning master-sin is, and many discoveries have been made of particular sins, as that which riseth and awakeneth first in the morning with us, that which rides and labors a man upon the Sabbath day, when the Lord or sin must ride in triumph; yet that is the misery of a carnal heart, that when he gives his beasts rest, yet such is sin's tyranny, he being sin's beast, that he shall then have no rest. Now, if their meaning be, that some particular sin may be a reigning sin, or a man's personal reigning sin, then it is true, Judas loves his bag best, and Achitophel and Hamon their honor best, and Herod his whore most. But if they mean a man's natural reigning sin, the reigning sin then it is not any particular sin so much as this. For no sin is able to reign over any man, but by commission and power from this. As the weeds can never grow tall, but by virtue of their soil where they grow. Matt. xv. 19. All the boughs flourish by virtue of the root whence they grow. And hence we shall see, let Satan sow his seeds of pride, or lust, or passion in a man whose nature is changed, it is impossible they should come to any perfection there, but they will die away within a time, because the heart of the soul is gone, and power of sin removed; and hence,

also, it comes to pass, that a man's master-sin may be changed; those sins that are his master-sins in his youth are not in his old age; those that are not at one time, in one place, are not in another. Now, there could never be such change in governors and viceroys, unless there were some great king, that sets up one, and pulls down another, *satis pro imperio;* this is, therefore, the reigning sin, which has taken possession of every part, which has its hand in every act, which pulls down one sin and sets up another under it, which gives strength to every sin that has any, which fights it out till the last; this is, I say, the reigning sin; hence think not that then the reigning sin is down, when your personal sins are destroyed, though it be with a most sudden and fearful destruction.

III. That when the Spirit of God humbles the soul indeed, he strikes the head, and wounds the heart of this sin; he doth not only cut off some limbs of it, not only bind it, but slay it of its life and power. That, as it is with some men, they may have many pains, gripes, diseases, yet live and recover again, but the pangs are not so strong as to separate soul and body, for then the man is gone. So a carnal heart he may be troubled, and have many gripes of conscience, and apply the promise, "Come to me, you that be weary," and so he may find rest, and as he recovers his peace, his sin recovers its strength; but when the pangs are so strong as separate body and soul, sin of nature which has lived there; now the man dies; now the soul falls down indeed. Now, this effectual humiliation carries the soul unto Christ; and hence, (Acts xxvi. 18,) "Turned from the power of Satan to God;" (Col. i. 13,) "He has delivered us from the power of darkness." And hence, (Gal. v. 24,) "They that be in Christ have crucified the flesh, as well as the affections and lusts." For if the Lord should only humble a man for the sins of a wicked life, and some wants in the heart, the Lord should only bruise Satan's heel, but never strike his head; the Lord should slay the Amalekites, but spare Agag. It is true, the Lord usually, at first conversion, sets one sin upon the soul that brings to mind many other, and the Lord humbles for them, and here the soul is apt to rest as many do; but when the Lord comes, indeed, to work, he cuts thus deep as I now speak. 1 Cor. xv. It is said, "The Lord must reign till all his enemies are put under his feet." Look, therefore, as this sin is the greatest enemy Christ hath, so if he reigns in heaven, he will be sure, above all other sins, to strike the head of this, and disthrone this; and we shall find that there may be deep terrors upon the false-hearted virgins, but they only assault the soul; so on saints, but Christ then strikes at the sin, and

saves the soul. Is. lvii. 16, 17. And, this I add, there may be a great power of Christ put forth to humble the soul, but men's hearts resist this; and even Pharaoh was humbled, but it is never saving, unless it strike the very power and throne of sin, and so this sin; and now the soul is humbled indeed.

IV. That no unregenerate man ever had such a measure of humiliation as ascended to and ended in this, though he may have all that humiliation which is precedent unto this; as,—

1. The Lord may arm first some few and then many of the sins of their lives upon them, so as they may feel the most intolerable burden of them; not only to stand convinced they are most grievous sinners, but to shed many tears, nay, to be sore troubled and distressed; O, the heavy wrath that lies upon my soul! Thus Saul. 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. And hence many make heavy complaints; O, the Lord hears me not. "Send for Moses," saith Pharaoh. "My sin is greater than I can bear," saith Cain. Nay, not only so, but they may feel more terrors than many of the saints, as the damned now; for the Lord lays this burden upon his people's backs in measure, but the Lord empties out the whole sack upon them, and the ground of this is but the sting of sin, or the gnawings of particular sins in the conscience, not the burden of the sin of nature as yet.

2. You will say, These fell from God, never looked to Christ, nor left their sin; but I have done so. I have seen the mercy of God in the gospel, the Lord Jesus has been revealed there; and I have seen sin; I must part with my sin if ever I have him, and so I have. And this you may have, you may see an excellency in Christ, and be so affected with hope of his mercy, and melt at the thoughts of his love, as to cast off all outward evils that thou hast, or the world lives in. 2 Pet. ii. 20. So that thou mayst escape these by coming to him to remove them, and by seeing that else thou shalt have none of him; and hence hated thou mayst be of the world. The reason is, Christ has only washed thy skin, but never changed thy nature as yet, so that you may thank God my conscience is clear.

3. You may have not only outward acts, but, for a time, inward lusts quenched, that a man has no mind nor heart to any sinful way, nor to the dearest sins he has lived in, whilst horror lies upon him. As in Judas, when God did heat his conscience, his lust, after his bag was gone, he had more mind to a halter, and hence throws away his pieces of silver, and innocent blood lies heavy. O, the mercy of a Christ that I have slighted! He thought he might have his money, and Christ escaped with his life, and his sin pardoned afterward. And hence it is said,

(Matt. xxvii. 3,) "When he saw he was condemned, he repented," and, as a man not worthy to live in his own thoughts, "he goes and hangs himself." It is with the soul as with water, all the cold may be gone, but the native principle of cold remains still. You may remove the burning of lusts, not the blackness of nature, from a carnal heart, and the ground holds, nature is not changed. This I say, an unregenerate man may have, but yet never find this change of nature, where the power of sin lies; change of conscience from security to terror, change of life from profaneness, and civility, and fashions of the world, to escape pollutions thereof; change of lusts, nay, quenching them for a time; but the nature is never changed in the best hypocrite that ever was. As, (2 Pet. ii. 19, 20,) "They were washed," but never from their swinish nature, and here they ever fall; (Prov. xxx. 12,) "There is a generation clean in their own eyes, yet not washed from their own filthiness." 2 Tim. ii. 18–21. Alexander fell, and Hymeneus fell; they talked of the glorious estate of saints, and that here was all the resurrection that is to be expected; and it seems it was such a fall of such persons that many stumbled, and said, How shall we know we are the Lord's? doubtless we may fall. No, "The foundation remains sure, and the Lord knows who are his." They were none of his all that time. "And let all that profess Christ depart from iniquity; for he that purgeth himself shall be a vessel of honor." And, therefore, read through all the Scripture constantly, never any hypocrites but they had this brand; (Matt. vi. 23,) "You workers of iniquity." Herod and Judas had their haunts, etc. And (Rom. i. and ii.) the apostle shows that all were under sin. He may in every thing else be humbled, for all the humiliation besides this strengthens sin in its kingdom, and binds a man faster under the dominion of it. And hence such men are more hard to be convinced than men that were never cast down at all.

But this he never finds; for, if he should, then, —

1. A graceless heart might partake of the greatest benefit of the covenant of grace and love of God. For, (Rom. xi. 26,) "This is my covenant, to take away their sin." For to subdue sin is greater love than to conquer devils, death, and hell. Is. xi. 6. It is turning lions into lambs.

2. Then an unregenerate man may partake of the last end of all the sufferings and sorrows of Christ, which is "to save his people from their sin." And hence, (John i. 29,) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." 1 John ii. 5, 7, "Christ came to destroy the works of the devil." This, therefore, he ever falls short of. He that hath found this easy, and accounts this work common, never had it yet.

Quest. How may a Christian know when the Lord hath changed his nature, and taken down the power of his sin?

Ans. It might suffice to evidence this against all gainsayers, that thus it is, and so to know it by the Spirit's witness, which shows us the things freely given of God, who, to save the Lord a trying another day, tries us now, and makes known these hidden works. Especially seeing some divines think, that as the first Adam conveyed this sin of nature, I not knowing, so the second Adam doth also remove this by an immediate stroke, I conceive it is so also, but not only by it. And, therefore, take two evidences now.

1. Wherever this is done, that soul doth not only see this sin; for so an unregenerate Paul did; (Rom. vii. 9,) where "sin revived," etc. And the word is a "divider of joints and marrow." Nor do they only feel this as an evil, and so be much troubled with it; but when the Lord makes the dejected soul feel it as its greatest evil, so long as it remains in its being, (as it will,) worse than death, than hell, than all afflictions, and miseries. It is not a particular sin, but this that he feels thus. You will say this is a high pitch. I say, consider if any man was ever humbled under sin, but he that felt sin as it is. For, if I feel it not as it is, I am deceived. Now, it is the greatest evil; to depart from a living God is worse than for a soul and body, and all creatures to depart from me. To make God miserable is worse than for all creatures ever to be made so; and sin in its tendency doth so, being a cross to his will. Is. i. 24. Hence he that feels it indeed, feels it so; the beginning of which is a sorrow and mourning after God, that it might be so; (Is. lxiii. 17,) "Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?" But thus it is, indeed. Rom. vii. 24. And when it is thus, it will hold thus till death, while the cause remains; nay, the more life and love, the more tender it grows; setting aside some careless fits. And hence its greatest joy is to think of the time it shall be forever holy. And hence accounts no such mercy as to be set at liberty to live to God indeed. A graceless heart sees and fears it, and cries out of himself for it; but stay a while, and he loseth his tenderness, either because he can not part with it, or because of Christ, he looks now to him, or because he hath now some sprinkling of the Spirit, nature is eased thereby, and he is quieted; and hence never any carnal heart, but some root of bitterness did grow up at last in this soil. Hence ordinances profit not, because feeling is lost. But the soul thus feeling it, beholding the holiness of God and love of Christ, and its constant withdrawings, resistings, O, it cuts deep!

2. Then the nature is changed, when the conscience being still and quiet, and the soul assured of the Lord's love, yet nothing gives the heart quiet till it is contiguous to God in Christ to enjoy him, in his holiness, and in the love and delight of his whole will. For this is a certain rule, if the nature be not changed, if conscience be but once quieted with the sense of God's love, and affected with it, and has not God indeed, nor his work, to quiet it, it will fall to lusting after creatures and live upon them, and feed the heart there. For, as it is impossible for a man to live, or to be without provision, so the world being provision for the flesh, meat, drink, sleep, and these lawful things, there it doth and will lie quiet without God. But now, where the nature is changed, and there is another nature, there is something else provided for it to live on, and that is the Lord and his will. As Christ said, "It is my meat and drink to do his will;" (and Rom. vii. 22,) "I delight in the law of God in the inner man." There was somewhat that loathed it, but there was somewhat else delighted in it, and there lies its life; and though the heart would rest and give over sometimes, yet it is a law of the mind that the soul has, he can have, no rest. Rom. viii. 5. And, therefore, take a child of God, let him have meat, drink, sleep, blessing in his calling, preach, pray, and have honor, yet he will constantly come home to the Lord mourning. What! doth all this do me good? When I rise up, lie down, eat, drink, and pray, and do all without him! An untuned heart all this while. The world stands between him and the Lord all this while, but this doth not. Many a sincere heart has heavy complaints and many doubts, because it is not thus; this rather is an evidence of peace, than God's war against it. It is an old rule, he that can live in heaven, shall; and there is nothing but a God to suck in, and breathe out, and live unto. Is this thy element now?

O, consider and examine yourselves here, you poor saints, that you may be comforted. Others of you, if now you do not, the Lord Jesus will another day, and bring these secret things of darkness to light. If thou findest this was never yet done, know it, all thy tears, and fears, and prayers have been in vain; and under the power of sin and Satan thou still art, through the fierce wrath of God against thee. And there I leave thee till the Lord find thee out.

Section II.

II. A fullness of illumination in the room of darkness. But let it be first noted that I speak not here of revelations of future events. When virgin churches shall fall a dreaming, it is a

sign they fall a sleeping. Nor of revelation of new doctrines, nor yet of the love of Christ and assurance thereof; but of the person of Christ, a work common to all the elect, and not peculiar to some; for Christ may not appear in his promise of love for a time to a sincere heart, yet this is then wrought. I shall, therefore, express my thoughts herein in four conclusions.

Concl. 1. That all unregenerate men are under the power of darkness, of ignorance; (Eph. v. 8,) "You were darkness" in the abstract. Eph. iv. 18. So that "they can not understand the things of the Spirit of God." 1 Cor. ii. 14. Especially the Lord Jesus; for the knowledge of him is above nature, not only corrupted, but pure nature. Nay, though the Lord gives the best and clearest means of revealing himself, yet they can not see; (John i. 5,) "Light shined in darkness, and it comprehended him not," no more than he whose visive faculty is lost, when the sun shines round about him. Nay, that light which is in them is darkness. Matt. vi. 23. And then, how great is that darkness! For many men might have known Christ, but that they thought they did know him before, and so are delivered up in these chains of darkness to the prince of darkness; but are like wilderness shrubs, shall never see when good comes. Ministers (as Christ did) may mourn over them, but can never help them until the Lord pull off their scales. For they please themselves in darkness, and love it more than light, and are not as Paul, praying and mourning under the scales that are upon their eyes.

Concl. 2. That there is a state of light to which God calls his people only; or, rather, that there is a spirit of light, illumination or revelation, let into the mind, which is peculiar to the beloved of Christ. 1 Pet. ii. 9. As of other things, so especially of the Lord Jesus. 2 Cor. iv. 4–6. And it is so glorious a work that Christ himself admires the Father, and stands in a ravishment at it. Matt. xi. 25. To babes, incapable of all others of knowledge; yet to them doth the Lord reveal some things that the wisest in the world never knew. I do believe, that the greatest scholar that ever lived never had one such thought or apprehension of the Lord, and the things of the Lord, as the saints have. And hence Christ professeth, O, "blessed are your eyes that they see;" and themselves bless him, and fall a wondering many times; "Lord, why dost thou manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?" And, therefore, it is an injury to the grace of God, to make precious things common, and all the work of the Spirit on the understanding to be common to reprobates, and to say, the difference lies only in the work of the

Spirit upon the will; (John vi. 45,) "He that has heard and learned of the Father comes to me." If the learning of the Father be common to a reprobate, then either they may come to Christ, which is there denied, or Christ's promise is false, for then a carnal heart may bear and learn of the Father, and never come to Christ.

Concl. 3. That, notwithstanding it is thus with them, yet foolish virgins may have some light in their lamps, some sight and knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is said, we live in days of light, and so indeed we do; but as the Lord said to them that had seen his miracles, "yet the Lord had not given them eyes to see to this day;" they were enlightened, yet fell. Heb. vi. 4. I shall therefore speak not of the revelation of all the word, but of Christ the end of it, and the knowledge of whom comprehends all the rest.

1. There is a knowledge of Christ in many a man which is begot by common fame, and human private instruction, which men, hearing from credible men, conceive of and believe; as that Christ is the Saviour of the world, is come, is dead, is risen, is at God's right hand, that in him God's justice and mercy are reconciled, that there is mercy with him for the greatest of all sinners, etc. And, according as men are more or less instructed, so do men conceive and believe. But now this knowledge is but traditional, and begot by common fame and human report, like Herod's, that heard many things of Christ, and yet indeed despised him. The Lord, I know, doth make use of this to cause the soul to come to further sight of him, as in the Queen of Sheba; but it is far enough off from giving any saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus; and hence, (John i. 46,) when they had been with Christ, they do not wish them to rest in the report, but come and see; so you hear of these things, but come and see these things. You have learned them from man, come unto the Lord that he may teach them; and hence we shall see many of the people of God that have been put to a question of all things that ever they learned, and learned them over again; as, whether there be a Christ or no, etc. And they never saw these things indeed, until the Lord taught them a second time; hence, therefore, those that have been thus trained up, and have been troubled and comforted by some conceived promises of Christ, but never saw any more of his person than what you have learned before, "your eyes are closed up to this day."

2. If any man should see and behold Christ really, immediately, this is not the saving knowledge of him. I know the saints do know Christ as if immediately present; they are not

strangers by their distance; if others have seen him more immediately, I will not dispute it; but if they have seen the Lord Jesus as immediately as if here on earth, yet Capernaum saw him so; nay, some of them were disciples for a time, and followed him, (John vi.,) and yet the Lord was hid from their eyes; nay, all the world shall see him in his glory, which shall amaze them; and yet this is far short of the saving knowledge of him, which the Lord doth communicate to the elect. So that though you see the Lord so really as that you become familiar with him, yet, (Luke xiii. 26,) "Lord, have we not eaten and drunk?" etc. And so perish.

3. A man may see the Lord in his wonderful works, and glorious kingdom and government, and yet not know him savingly; wondrous deliverances, preservations of himself, and of God's people, dreadful destruction of enemies, such as they can not but say, "This is the finger of the Lord," and yet know not. Deut. xxix. 1–4. And hence (John xv. 24) men think such things are done, and shall I ever be vile again? yet they become as bad as ever.

4. He may see the Lord Jesus yet more clearly by the letter of the Scripture, which, though it brings to the saving knowledge of Christ, yet to see the Lord Jesus no otherwise than by the strength of fancy and understanding, from thence is no saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and hence (Rom. xvi. 26) the mystery of the gospel was hid from the Jews, but now it is revealed to all nations; literally to all where it comes, savingly to some few. For, between the saving knowledge of Christ in the gospel, and palpable ignorance of him in the gospel, there is his middle knowledge, which is literal, whereby a man doth see; "yet in seeing, sees not," (Is. vi. 9,) which is the state of a church which has been long trained up under good means; and hence we shall see many men of great learning have been able to write volumes of the mystery of Christ, and yet in "seeing never saw."

5. There may be in a false heart a strange knowledge of Christ without Scriptures, which may ravish a man's deluded heart strangely, which is usually the first temptation of the virgin churches, that are of much knowledge and little love. 2 Cor. xi. 2–4. Wherein Satan doth not seek to pull away men to forsake the gospel, but from the simplicity of the gospel, "Repent, and believe, and be saved;" for, saith he, "Satan is transformed into an angel of light;" and hence we have heard that some have heard voices; some have seen the very blood of Christ dropping on them, and his wounds in his side; some have seen

a great light shining in the chamber; some wonderfully affected with their dreams; some, in great distress, have had inward witness, "Thy sins are forgiven;" and hence such liberty and joy that they are ready to leap up and down the chamber. O, adulterous generation! This is natural and usual with men, they would earnestly see Jesus, and have him present to give them peace; and hence Papists have his image; and hence Christ gives the sacrament to show himself as familiarly as can be. Hence Thomas would not believe, "unless he might put his finger in his side," and the Lord tendered him, yet pronounced "them blessed that have not seen, and yet believed." John xx. 29. So I say, *e contra*, Woe to them that have no other manifested Christ but such a one. Little do you think what wrong you do to Christ; for you do as much as in you lies to eclipse all his glory at the last day, as the wicked by their sins eclipse his glory at this day; (2 Thess. i. 10,) "He shall be admired in all that believe." Why? Because your testimony was believed; that faith which closeth with, and sees Christ in a testimony, is that whereby Jesus shall be admired at the world's end.

Concl. 4. That the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ is this, whereby the soul, being sensible of his ignorance of Jesus, beholds such a glory of Christ's person, as that he esteems him in all his glory, as his present, greatest, and only good. I will take this in pieces.

1. I say that soul which has truly and savingly seen the Lord Jesus has been made sensible of his ignorance of him; I see him not, I have heard of him and read of him, and taken his name into my mouth and professed him; and I believe others see him, and blessed are their eyes; but I see him not; (John ix. 26, 37, 39,) "For judgment am I come into this world." And look, as all the increase of the knowledge of Christ comes in by this door, so the beginning of it; and, therefore, those that have been cast down and heard of Christ a Saviour, but never felt their ignorance of him before they have apprehended him, their light is darkness, and their knowledge full of delusion and idolatrous.

2. It beholds a glory in Christ's person; for before the Lord reveals his Son to any, look, what he was to the Jews he is to every man; (Is. liii. 2, 3,) "He is rejected and despised of men;" nothing so mean as Christ, every vanity preferred above him, and men can do no other, because they see not his glory and beauty; (1 Cor. ii. 8,) "If they had known," etc. Therefore the Lord reveals his hidden glory to them, such as never entered into their hearts before, or into the minds of other men, which though others may talk of, yet they can not see it in that manner

as they do. It is called, therefore, marvelous light which he doth reveal when the soul hath been viewing its own shame and filth, when all the grass and glory is withered, (Is. xl. 6,) then the glory of Christ is revealed; one every way so fit and suitable to them, according to all their wants and woes, by some sermon or other, which, when the soul doth see, it usually fills the head, and heart, and eyes with tears. O, that I have despised him so glorious! Acts ii. 36, 37; 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6. If the soul should not feel its ignorance of him, it would never esteem the sight of him; but now it doth thus, and now that glory is revealed; (John i. 14,) "We beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son." In every truth there is a glory which men see not, and this is called in Scripture "the finding of the pearl." Matt. xiii. 45.

III. He so beholds him in his glory, as that he now esteems of him in all his glory. For a Balaam may see the glory of the tents of Israel and the star of Jacob, but they esteem not of him in all his glory. The damned in hell see a glory in Christ, else they would never grieve for the loss of him; but it is only in regard of something in Christ delivering saints from sorrows they feel. Nay, many reprobates, under a lively ministry, shall see some glory in Christ and in saints, to think them the happy men, yet not esteem of him in all his glory; but it is otherwise here. The Lord ariseth as the sun upon the earth, which makes all things that have any glory to appear therein, and it puts a glory on every thing that was hid before. So Christ puts a glory on every thing of himself; so that,—

1. The soul sees a glory in the grace of Christ. John i. 14. For the glory of Christ's person is not seen without these excellencies; (Luke i. 46,) "My soul magnifies the Lord."

2. A glory in the holiness of Christ. Is. vi. 3. Especially to consider, It is in him to make me holy. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

3. A glory in his covenant and promises. Ps. lxv. 1, 2. O that all those promises might be made good to me! This is all my desire. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

4. A glory in the government, and commands, and will of Christ. O, if once I could in every thing give content to his heart! Ps. xix. 10. That the soul had rather lose all than cross his will in a small thing, seeing a glory in the least truth, in casting off a ceremony, etc. Zach. vi. 13.

5. A glory in all the ordinances of Christ. "O, how amiable are thy tabernacles, O God!" O, the fellowship of saints! O, the peace on Sabbaths!

6. A glory in all his carriage. Let him bless me with

outward estate, though but a little. This is the allowance that Christ in glory provides for me. Let him threaten me, "Good is the word of the Lord." Let him desert me, his anger is love. O, that is glorious. Let him take all from me, reproach me, "Moses esteems Christ's reproach greater riches than Egypt," which is our estate here. It sees a glory in all Christ's ways, and quiets itself here; "It is the Lord," as Eli said. Thus saints see and esteem of Christ in all his glory, and we shall find a false heart even fall short here, a sincere heart never; but commonly it is so taken up with it, that if you ask, Suppose you should have all grace, holiness, promises of Christ, etc., would not this be mercy? Yes; enough. I should, then, boast in him, and bless him forever. And hence Christ is called (Luke ii. 33) "The glory of Israel," because they so esteem him. And, (Is. xxviii. 5,) "In that day the Lord shall be a diadem of glory." Others may, in horror, prize Christ above the world; but it is only to ease them.

IV. I add, he esteems him thus, —

1. As his present good; so that if the Lord doth withdraw or deny himself, now unto him nothing in this world can for the present quiet him. Jer. l. 4, 5. Hence those in their judgments acknowledge Christ the greatest good, and when they are dying, and see he will so at the last day, yet now for the present a little more liberty in sin, sloth, lust, honor, gain, lots, large accommodations are better. You never saw him. O, vile world, the Lord will one day condemn thee out of thine own mouth; thy own will was more dear to thee than his, this world's ease better than his peace, etc. When you lie on your death beds, you esteem him then. Why? Because he serves your turn then. Hence, before you did not.

2. As the greatest good. Deut. xxxiii. 26; Jer. x. 7. Hence those that see some good in Christ, and desire him, and offer fair for him, but prize him not as the greatest good. And hence with the young man, though content to part with somewhat, not with all, they will cast their rags down at Christ's feet, and entreat him to take away their sins, but will not cast their crowns down, the dearest things they have; and hence the thorny-ground professors ever fall away. The good things of this world, which they forsook in time of persecution, were dearer than Christ, and hence they fall away. It is a dishonor to a king to be valued as other men are. Zach. xi. 12, 13.

3. As the only good; (Is. xxiv. 23,) "The sun shall be confounded," etc. And though other things may steal into their hearts for a time, yet they recover themselves; this is the one

thing (Ps. xxvii. 4) that they beg in this life. And hence do fall short.

1. Those that esteem Christ as men do merchandise; they would fain have it, but are loth to bring it. Men may esteem Christ, as they think, the only good; but herein their falseness appears, that they neglect means to it, because they have some good else to quiet them. And here is condemned all lazy profession.

2. Those that would have Christ, and esteem him highly, and use means for him diligently, but they must have Christ, and world, and lust, and ease likewise. Christ to quiet their consciences, and the world their hearts; Christ to rest on when their duties fail them, and the world to rest in when the consolations of Christ are denied unto them. "The land is good; go up and possess it."

Object. 1. But do the saints come to this pitch?

Ans. 2 Cor. iv. 3, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that be lost." Who are those from whom Christ is hid? When is he hid? When his glory is hid. I know saints may feel a want of, and mourn for it; but it will appear, if they are the Lord's, at some time. Nay, this they will find, some and much contempt remaining which they oppose; yet this is here, and at parting times it is seen.

Object. 2. But saints can not know this.

Ans. Yes, (as well as they can know their contempt,) by means of God's Spirit; he that is carried from one contrary to another shall know it.

Object. 3. But hypocrites may attain to this.

Ans. 1. Then the gospel may be revealed to a hypocrite, and to them that are lost.

2. Then they may believe; for to them only the Lord is precious. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Then a thing is precious, when we value it according to the worth of it. Now the Lord is the greatest and only good, and then when we esteem him so; this is the work of believers only.

3. Then Christ may be a carnal man's treasure. For that is our treasure which we esteem most.

4. Then a carnal heart may honor Christ with one of the highest degrees of honor, which consists in this high esteem; (Luke i. 46,) "My soul magnifies the Lord."

5. Observe we, that never any lost Christ but because they undervalued him. Forsake all, and take the pearl. That it shall lie upon you one day; O, if Christ had had that esteem which lust and world hath had, I had had him now! Examine,

if it be thus, if you thus see and prize the Lord Jesus. O, be thankful that ever the Lord sent that messenger to reveal Christ! If not, O, go and mourn! Paul did so three days, (Acts ix.) when "he saw nothing." O, Christ hath been long hid from thee. O, few have this; but lay about for it, for else that in Matt. xxiij. 39 shall be your portion.

Section III.

III. Fullness of faith, in the room of unbelief.

For it is not unknown how strongly this sin keeps every man's palace, and that not Moses, but the Lord Jesus, is the stumbling-stone even of the Jews, the peculiar people of God. When men are at their last cast, that the Lord intends to wait to pity no more, at last the Son comes, and an unbelieving heart casts the balance and refuseth him. After that the Lord hath tried men by miraculous preservations, deliverances from Pharaohs, provision as Massah, then Canaan comes to be entered, and men can not enter because of unbelief. This sin stands in open view, and keeps the breach, when all other sins in appearance are beaten out of the field. Now, there is a Spirit of faith, which comes in the room of this unbelief, dispossesseth the soul of the power of it; for there may be some lighter strokes of the Spirit, which are lighter skirmishes with it, but yet it wins field again; as in the stony ground, that believed, but unbelief got head again in time of persecution and temptation, and then they fell away.

Quest. 1. What is this faith, or that fullness or full measure of it?

Ans. I shall not speak here of historical or miraculous faith; the first of which is in the devils, the second in some men only, that may perish afterward. Nor yet of that faith which we call of assurance, we shall not come yet to that. But of that which we call justifying faith, and that which doth first unite to Christ, and justify. Now, this faith is the coming of the soul to Christ. This is the general. For Adam had his life in himself, but now it is lost in us, but laid up in Christ. Col. iii. 3. Now, hence they that would have this life, must go out of themselves to the Lord for it. Now, the motion of the soul between these two extremes of emptiness and death here, to life and fullness there, what is it but faith? Which Adam had not, nor could have in that estate; and, therefore, none of the sons of Adam naturally can share in it.

And that this is faith it appears —

1. From John vi. 35. "I am the bread of life: he that comes

to me shall never hunger; and he that believes in me shall never thirst."

2. Because unbelief is the departing of the soul from the God of life. Heb. iii. 12. Not from a holy law, but from a living God.

3. Faith is the proper effect of vocation; or rather the chief part thereof. Now, look, as ineffectual vocation is when the Lord calls, but the soul never comes, so effectual vocation is whereby the Lord calls, and the soul answers, and so comes. So that to sit still and see nothing, and do nothing, is not faith, but sloth. No, Christ can not be in that soul that is yet in himself. Therefore faith is not a passive possibility of the soul to receive Christ, though that may prepare for him, but the going out of a man's self unto Christ.

Quest. 2. But may not a man come to Christ, that never shall have mercy from Christ?

Ans. Yes, there may be many lighter strokes, as in temporary believers. The world is at this day full of faith; every man thinks and saith he believes, though his faith be weak. It is men's buckler against all means, they know these sins, but as long as they believe all is well. And it is their comfort in all their troubles, though the Lord kills, yet they will believe. And I say, some men have departed indeed from the Lord; the gospel hath been preached, and they have made out of themselves to Christ, but missed of him. There is a bramble faith that catcheth and scratcheth Christ, kisseth and betrays him. That coming to Christ therefore which none else have the full measure of, it appears in these particulars.

It is that work of the Spirit whereby a sinner, sensible of his extreme nakedness, emptiness, and wants, being called of God, his whole soul comes out of himself to Christ, for himself. I speak not of assurance, for if that were faith, all reprobates then were bound to believe an untruth, viz., that God the Father loves, and Christ hath died for them.

1. It is a work of God's Spirit, and hence it is called the Spirit of faith, not only because wrought by it, but because the Spirit is in an admirable manner fastened to it, and clasped to the soul, and the soul to Christ by it.

2. The subject in which it is wrought; a sinner sensible of his extreme wants; for faith springs out of the destruction of our own excellency, and ruins of it; like Christ, that did arise a root out of a dry ground; for the Lord's great plot is to advance Christ and his rich grace. Now, look, as it is obscured by bringing any thing of our own to it, so it is advanced by fetching all

from it; this can never be till the soul is sensible of his nakedness, emptiness, and wants; let Christ be never so sweet, a full soul will loathe him; and I say extreme want. The prodigal never comes home till he dies for hunger; for such is the senselessness of men, and dislike of Christ, that extremities only drive them hither, as Judges v. 6. When the Midianites came, they ran like beasts to their den, and until bread was taken from them, they cry not unto the Lord, but then they do; so men have neither hearts, or, if so, no heads to come to Christ till now; and usually the Lord makes this the ground of the soul's first motion towards Christ. I die here, and because of my wants I therefore come. Pardon sin, because great. Ps. xxv. 11. Be merciful, because it is a stiff-necked people. Exod. xxxiv. 9. That so when the Lord pardons, the soul may have nothing to boast of but misery, and now it is hard to believe. But this is not all.

3. It must be called of God; for else the soul, though never so sensible of misery, could not, would not, durst not come; but it would either sink under its burden, or plead against all means; it shall presume, as Judas that had no look of Christ (as Peter had) hangs himself; and hence, (Jer. iii. 23,) "Come unto me; their heart answered, We come." For this is usually the objection of the soul when it sees the riches of mercy, What have I to do with it, that am so vile, and have fallen so oft, and rejected the Lord, and am like to do so? I shall sin the more by this means. No, the command of the gospel comes, O, come, notwithstanding all this, nay, because of this, for I will heal you of them. Now, this call hath two things in it. 1. It is particular; for general invitations to believe and come in are made particular to the elect, who else would not come in; and hence, (Is. xliii. 1,) "I have called thee by name." For we shall find that the hearts of men, when they see a promise, can not think it concerns them; all that hunger shall be satisfied, but shall I? And hence show them it is as particular as the law, they can not think it is to them; and hence they say sometime the word *all* is not put in. Now, that is the mighty power of unbelief, a word spoken to all is regarded by none till the Lord make it particular; and hence (Is. ii.) Christ is said to judge the nations: now, when judges ride their circuits, they do not make laws, but only apply laws. One man is brought before them to be condemned; he hopes better, but he is so; now he trembles. Another to be acquitted; he fears, being falsely accused; he is freed, and now he rejoiceth. 2. It is a living call, or powerful call. John v. 25. And hence a man may live under the calls of the minister long,

and never come, because it is not made living from the Lord of life; and hence not irresistible.

4. Upon this call the whole soul comes out of itself to Christ; for if a man could climb the clouds, and unlock the doors of heaven, and come Elias-like in his body to Christ, he might miss of Christ, as well as those that came and followed Christ, for a time, with their bodies while he lived on the earth. A man may come to Christ with half his soul or heart; there may be some hope and some desires, some love and some cleaving to him, and choice of him really, inwardly, and yet not savingly, because the whole soul is not here come, but half of it. James i. 7, 8. Now, the whole soul then comes, when all the affections and will take their flight to the Lord, and fasten there. When all the affections are gathered from all other things and changed, and so they come to, and embrace the Lord; so that hope waits only here, When will the Lord pity me? Desires that were set on a thousand things before, all long after him, love only tasteth him; the Lord letting in some sight of the freeness of mercy, hope looks out hither; the Lord showing the want, and the way to it, desire breaks down stone walls and all means, and the difficulty of them, to have him. The Lord letting the soul taste the sweetness of Jesus and his grace, the soul joys, and love embraceth, and the will fosters; a carnal heart desires, loves, joys, in other things, and the Lord also, and so hath a false heart. But the whole heart comes hither, and when it is here, thinks one heart too little; nay, one life, one soul; and when any part of the affections are left any where else, then the soul mourns, hates that bondage, is ashamed of it, etc. So that the stream of the whole soul runs now hither. Ps. cxix. 2; Jer. iii. 10; Ps. xlv. 10. So it is with the soul, as with them when they were to come out of Egypt, they would not leave child nor hoof behind, lest there should be any occasion of return; as it is with the soul departed from the body, it only minds the Lord it hath taken leave of all, so by faith the whole soul leaves all and comes to the Lord; otherwise the soul is not come to Christ, but reacheth after Christ; like men that waded after the ark, but perished in the waters. Their arms are not long enough, their desires and love are not long enough, to reach Christ; the bent and stream of the soul is set and runs here. It is with the soul as it is with two rivers, both run with all their strength to the sea, but the great river is bigger, and runs faster, yet the other's stream is wholly carried thither. So some men may be more full of faith than others, yet both run to the sea, and as rivers, they run in their circles, this way and that way, and are sometimes dammed

up, yet end there. So the souls of all saints run to this and the other creature, yet they end in the Lord at last. | As Peter and John, that ran to the sepulcher, though one outran the other, yet they came both to the Lord at last; when both of them had, for a time, forsook him, though all the world draw the soul back, it can not live without the Lord; nay, though the Lord beat away the soul from him, yet it follows after him.

5. It is to the Lord for himself; for (John vi.) some came to Christ for loaves, and could have been glad if Christ had been king for it, but did not care for himself; and hence (ver. 27) he points and turns them to himself: some came to him for higher ends, therefore were his disciples, that is, for life from him. But "his flesh and blood, or else you die," it was a hard saying; they could not understand nor see what that meant, and hence forsook him; but when they come and receive him himself, now life is, indeed, theirs.

So that it is Christ's person that this faith first pitcheth on, as it is in marriage, and those that come for this were never sent away. Now, the soul is truly come to him for himself, 1. When himself gives rest to the soul in the want of all things. Heb. iv. 3. If friends, protection, strength, life, glory, be wanting, yet having him, in him I have all these; when all is sold away, not the treasure only, but the field contents him; for it looks on this as better than heaven, than glory; it comforts the soul that the Lord himself should be mine. 2. The soul that taketh him, it is not only to make boast of him, as Capernaum had him, nor to cover sloth, and sin, and delusion by him. I have Christ, and I have no more to care for, etc., but to live on him; (John vi. 57,) "He that eateth me shall live by me." Phil. iii. 9, 10. A man takes not Christ as medicine to ease him, nor as stately hangings to adorn him, but as bread to receive life from him. For many receive Christ, rest they do upon him, and rest, they say, in him, but they do not suck any good from him; nay, before they had any Christ or assurance of him they were better than now. You have nothing to do with the Lord Jesus, you are out of your place. As in Jotham's parable, the olive and vine would not be pulled out of their places, to be set on the tops of other trees, as kings, lest they lose their fatness and sweetness; so, since you have closed with Christ, you have lost your fatness and sweetness that once you had, you are now out of your place; go to your horrors and sorrows again, till the Lord so give himself to you as that you may receive life from him.

Quest. 3. But must all come thus to Christ with their whole soul? will not part of the price serve?

Ans. No, the whole soul must come, and can not but come.

1. In regard of the jealousy of God; who is like a jealous husband, can bear with many weaknesses, but will have the whole heart; and they that do not shall be destroyed for spiritual whoredom. Ps. lxxiii. 27. He should dishonor Christ else, to sell him so cheap.

2. In regard of the excellency of Christ; the Lord draws the soul by the revelation of him. Rom. i. 16, 17; Is. lv. 3, 4. Now, look as men in this world, when they see a seeming good, their whole soul is overpowered to be drawn after it. So here, when such an object is seen, especially the soul having been at his sepulcher weeping, as iron never stirs till the loadstone comes, and then it makes to that only, not to things touched with it; for as "we love him because he loved us first," so Christ loving the soul with all his heart, and his whole heart set upon him, the whole soul is, *e contra*, set on Christ.

3. In regard else a man can receive nothing from the Lord. Jer. xxix. 12, 13. As it is with conduit pipes, let them be laid, but not reach the conduit head, no water can come to that family, so here; and this is the reason why men live and pray, and receive nothing, their hearts reach not hither. Men's hearts reach but half way to Christ. Tell me else, did you ever not receive?

4. Because else it is, indeed, no coming to him, but a leaning on him or toward him. So as it is with trees, if not cut off quite, or not pulled up quite by the roots, they can not be set in another orchard; if the tree be left with never so little twigs in the ground, so here; nay, the Lord accounts this worse than if a man had not come at all. Jer. iii. 10. The Lord abhors a double heart, that, Judas-like, forsakes all for the Lord, but then loves the Lord and the bag too. You are not the Lord's. As it was with that man that quarreled about the tree, it leaned over the pales, but the root being found to be there, his it was; so, though he lean on Christ, he is none of his.

Quest. 4. But do all saints come to this measure?

Ans. Ponder these grounds else.

Object. But are not our hearts partly carnal, and so close with the creature?

Ans. True; but yet, —

1. So far as it is carnal, it is lamented heavily; so that they grow not there, but are dying, withering daily. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. When a man's affections grow out of the world, and there is no fear nor sorrow, in this respect now, no Christ is there.

2. The bent and bias of the soul carries the whole soul hither. For I would not judge of this so much by sudden pangs, as by

an inward bent; for the whole soul, in affectionate expressions and actions, may be carried unto Christ, but being without this bent and change of affections, it is unsound, as in Gideon, they would on a hurry make him king; he would not; he knew it was a sudden pang which would die. And the reason is, the true turn of the whole soul is not by turning old affections upon another object, but changing them first by this bent, and so turning them. For a carnal heart may have the first, as the same eye may see the sun and a dunghill, and the eye not changed; so here. Now, when the whole soul is set here, it is never at rest till here.

Quest. 5. But may not hypocrites come to this?

Ans. 1. Then they may be blessed. Ps. cxix. 2.

2. Then they shall never be cast off from Christ. John vi. 37.

3. Then they may partake of that which the Lord only looks for. For why is the Lord angry? The heart is gone from him. Why is the ministry ordained, but to win the whole heart to him? John iii. 19–21. O, therefore, consider whether it hath been thus with you or no. If not, woe to you! O, be very careful here. It is a thousand to one if some part of your heart be not fixed elsewhere. If Christ were at judgment, and should say, "Come, ye blessed," how glad would ye be! O, he saith now, Come, and take myself.

Section IV.

IV. Fullness of the Spirit itself in the room of Satan.

I shall not speak here either concerning that fullness of the Spirit in extraordinary gifts, spoken of frequently in the Acts, nor yet of that fullness of the Spirit which some Christians, that the Lord sets apart to do and suffer more for him, shall receive more than others. For (John xiv. 17) the disciples had the Spirit, and yet Christ promises to send them the Spirit. And Stephen was a man "full of faith and the Holy Ghost." Acts vi. 8. And Barnabas, (Acts xi. 14) "was a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost." But I shall speak of that Spirit which is in every believer, without which we are not Christ's. Rom. viii. 9. And this is that Spirit which is opposite to the evil spirit, the prince of darkness, which possesseth with craft and power all the souls of the sons of men, who doth not only encamp about men, (1 Pet. v. 7, 8,) nor only "work within them," (Eph. i. 2, 3,) but he inhabiteth and dwelleth in men. He doth not only take men captives, (2 Tim. ii. 26,) but he dwells in and possesseth the souls of his captives. Luke xi. 21. And

though he doth depart for a time, yet (ver. 26) "they return and dwell there." Now, in the room of this, comes God's Spirit, who (ver. 22) is said to be stronger than Satan, which can not be meant but of Christ's Spirit. That as it is with a man whose heart is turned from the Lord, he is not left only to be carried by the power of his sin, but by the power of Satan also. So when the whole soul is turned unto him, the Lord leaves not the soul to be carried along by the power of his own grace or faith, but the Spirit itself fills and acts that soul. And as the soul was carried by the mighty power of Satan before, it is now carried by the almighty power of the Spirit itself; hence (1 Pet. i. 5) "kept by the mighty power of God through faith;" and hence (Acts xxvi. 18) "turned from the power of Satan," not to duties, but to God himself, i. e., the Spirit of God, and so to close with him.

Quest. What is this Spirit which the saints have?

Ans. I shall express myself in these three conclusions:—

Concl. 1. That if Adam had stood, he and all his posterity should have had that power, and presence, and constant assistance of the Spirit of God, as that they should never have fallen, nor have been able to fall in respect of the assistance of the Spirit. He should have been green all the year long, his blossom should not have been blasted, his fruit should never have withered. And the ground is the rule of justice; for if he falling, all his posterity are forsaken of God, and under the reign of sin, and death, and Satan. Rom. v. 18, 21. Then he standing, all his posterity should have had the everlasting presence of God, and should have been under the reign of the Spirit of grace and life. Thus also the covenant ran, "do and live."

Concl. 2. That the Lord Jesus, the second Adam, standing and rising in the room of all his people, hence he doth convey and propagate, to all his posterity, the immutable and constant assistance and presence of his Spirit, whereby being once begotten of him, and called to him, they never afterward depart from him. And though weak in themselves, yet assisted by the Spirit, do not, can not depart wickedly again. The Lord Jesus having stood, they can not fall, because by virtue of his standing they have this presence of the Holy Ghost; (John xiv. 19,) "Because I live, you shall live also." John vi. 57, "As the living Father sent me, and I live by him," etc. Christ, standing next to the Father, lives by him; we, standing next to Christ, live as infallibly by him. And, I say, the ground is Christ's standing. For though there be many reasons why the saints can never fall from Christ, as the Spirit of grace, covenant of grace, intercession

of Christ, yet the main ground is Christ's standing, without the least fall from the fulfilling of the first covenant, which we having, the first moment of believing, kept in Christ, hence the Spirit is given, and the covenant of grace, of strength. And hence, Rom. v. 21, and ver. 17, 18. And hence the Spirit is said to dwell in believers. Rom. viii. 11. And we are the temples of the Spirit, whether he dwell in them in his person personally, the well is here deep, but he dwells in them so as he never ceaseth assisting of them, so that they can not depart from the Lord again; hence, (Is. lix. 21,) "My Spirit shall not depart from thy seed." John xiv., it is called "the Spirit that abides forever." It binds the soul to the Lord, and keeps it so forever; never suffers that love-knot to be untied again. When the soul is weak, the Spirit helps him; when careless of itself, the Spirit keeps him; though the soul offers to run from the Lord, yet this Spirit follows him; though he grieves the Spirit, yet this Spirit still keeps his own house, will not depart from him; and so not suffer the soul to depart from the Lord. And this is the reason why the saints never fall from the Lord, though they have weak grace, poor beginnings, many sins, and Adam stood not, though with the perfect image of God upon him, because he had not this Spirit yet given; though he had the Spirit of God, yet not this Spirit, which some call the Spirit of adoption, given to him, because he had not fulfilled the first covenant, which we in Christ have, which is not only the ground of our never falling, but of assurance we shall never fall. For what breaks a man's peace after faith? Apparition of sin in the conscience. What makes that terrible? The law. Now, when I see in Christ I have kept all things in the law, not only the cry and accusations of the law and sin are stilled, but also there ariseth a holy boldness, and confidence, and joy, even before the face of an angry God. Eph. iii. 12. And as soul and body are ever knit, so here, etc.

Concl. 3. This Spirit thus assisting, no unregenerate man ever hath. I speak not now of keeping the soul from falling from grace, but from Christ.

1. Because the spirit of Satan fills them, he is the strong man that keeps the palace, under whose kingdom and power they are; and therefore this Spirit, which destroys the kingdom of Satan, is not in them.

2. Because this was a prerogative that Adam had not, though he had great gifts and glory otherwise; so this is not the gift which is given unto them.

3. Because this ariseth, and therefore is given because Christ

stood, and therefore those he never stood for, rose for, suffered for, never have it.

4. Therefore we shall see in experience, take the best professors living, though they may come, as they and others judged, to the Lord, and follow the Lord, yet they will in time depart, sometimes outwardly; (John vi. 64,) "There be some of you that believe not." See them, ver. 66. And why did they depart? "It was not given them of the Father." The Spirit never was given effectually to draw them, nor yet to keep them.

If not outwardly, at least inwardly; and hence hypocrites, though they have marvelous affections unto Christ, and so have spoken of him and commended him, and seemed to be carried above all creatures and duties toward him, yet himself, and his mercy, and his blood, becomes a common thing to them, and his knowledge and promises common; and hence they slight and loathe him, and mourn not for it, and so are so far from being kept close unto Christ, as that they are nearer the unpardonable sin than him. But all they have is like Jonah's gourd, which suddenly riseth, but there is a worm at the root that pulls it down again; and so their love dies to ministers that Christ sent, and to his truth and ordinances.

Quest. But if the Spirit doth thus, who then shall be saved? for who is there that departs not?

Ans. When I say the Spirit doth so assist the faithful as that they never depart, the meaning is not as though the soul should now never fall into any more sin or unbelief; for what do the saints more complain of than their backslidings? Is. lxiii. 17; Heb. xii. 1. Saints' hearts are no sooner raised up, but their weights grow heavy and press them down; no sooner do they walk in the way, but they begin to fall off; but when I say so, I say three things. 1. Their whole heart never departs. 2. They do not depart forever. 3. Though they do depart from the Lord, yet the Spirit doth not depart from them; as it is in common reason, the same thing may go either in a straight or crooked line to the same point; as a river may run in a straight or crooked line to the sea. So the saints, their springs (their hearts) being set a-running after the Lord, though they do not follow him in a straight line, so as never to depart to the right or left hand, yet they are so kept by the Spirit that they are continually making after him, cleaving to him; though with many crooked windings of their hearts, this way and that way from the Lord. And, therefore, as it is in a wheel, it stands bent for such an end, yet runs at one side, but is turned by the skill of him that guides it into the way again, and so let it run,

the man is with it; so it is here. And because something is like this in hypocrites, I shall endeavor to cut the thread.

I. Their whole hearts never do nor can depart from the Lord; all their sins and departings are against their new nature which the Lord hath given them. It is against the grain, which, as it aggravates their sin, so it shows the difference between their sins and the sins of other men; they may be drawn aside, but it is against their wills, or if so, yet against the bent of their hearts, which is set toward the Lord, and Zion-ward; they may be carried captive against their wills, as Paul complained he was, and made his moan to heaven of it; or if with their wills, yet it is against the active bent of their wills, which inclines them another way; (1 John iii. 9,) "They can not sin, because the seed remains in them;" so that they can not sin with their whole hearts, nor depart from Christ with their whole hearts; as it is with a woman, though her husband hath her whole heart, yet there is much weakness and sin mixed with this love; so that whatever unkindness she shows, it is not with her whole heart, but against it, and hence she is not cast off; so much more here. Or as it is with the unregenerate man possessed by Satan, though he may forsake many sinful courses, take up many duties, despise the world, yet it is not with his whole heart; and hence he is pulled back like a bird by the leg, Satan having an end of his heart, and he that is unholy and unclean will be so still. So, *e contra*, as it is with a stone; cast it up, it is against the bent of it, because the nature of it is to rest in the centre, and hence it comes down again. It is not by internal bent, but by external *vis* or force; so sin and Satan being cast out, though they work in the soul, yet they are external agents, (it is not I, but sin,) and hence it is against the bent. The whole soul, therefore, never departs from the Lord Jesus, but the Spirit keeps it there. As it is in the body of a man, he grows sick, and inclines toward a dissolution or consumption, and operations are hindered, and little delight in any thing, yet the soul and body are not yet parted wholly hereupon, for even then they are kept close. So, though the heart may depart, and incline towards consumption and death, and little can the soul do but lie still and grieve, yet the union between the Spirit and soul, once made, is never broken. For, as the whole soul departed and made disunion, so the whole soul returning makes the union. And hence, if ever after the whole soul should depart, the union should be broken, and hence look on a Christian when he is himself, he can not stir nor depart; partly by a spirit of fear. Jer. xxxii. 40. Like a man in a ship, he can not cast himself into the sea; it makes him trem-

ble to think, What if I should fall in! and hence keeps close in the ship, whatever storms come, whatever calms come, for he sees death before him. O, the loss of Christ and his fellowship hereafter, nay, here, is dreadful to him; partly by a spirit of love, it constrains us, that when the heart sometimes cares not for Christ, yet the spirit of love springs up: Shall I now leave him that pitied me, that brought me a pardon when my neck was on the block? etc.

II. When he doth depart by reason of some evil in his heart, yet it is not ever, but he must return sooner or later to him again, it was best with him then. For look as it is with Satan, how doth he carry the heart from God? You shall see it in Judas. John xiii. He stands at the door, and knocks by a sinful thought liked of verse 2. Then he enters the house by causing the will to resolve of it. He doth not carry men like those herds of swine, against their wills, but prevails with the will to resolve thus. Verse 27. Hereupon, Satan, having a commission, carries him out, and he must needs go whom the devil drives; so it is here; the Spirit, in recalling the soul, will have him come back. 1. Puts in secret, sweet, living thoughts again, and makes the soul consider and remember from whom it is fallen, or who is the Lord. 2. Then causeth the will to resolve of a return, and then he must go whom the Spirit draws; (Ps. lxiii. 6,) "David remembers the Lord on his bed," though now driven from all ordinances; hence, (verse 7,) "Under thy shadow I will rejoice;" hence, (verse 8,) "My soul followeth hard after thee, or cleaves to thee." But David was weak and feeble; how came he to do this? Verse 8, "Thy hand upholdeth me." Look, as it was with Samson, when his locks were cut, he was like other men, and was made to grind; but they grew again, and then he was like himself again. So when the affections and hearts to Christ are cut, they are like other men for a time; but they are continually coming and growing again, and then they are like themselves again. And I say they must return; for when the Spirit carries a man indeed, there is a necessity put upon him; (Acts iv. 20,) "We can not but speak the things we have heard;" and, (2 Cor. xiii. 8,) "We can do nothing against, but for the truth." For here we shall see the broad difference between a convicted hypocrite that knows all is amiss with him and the saints; he sees his falls from the Lord, and is afraid in his conscience of misery if he doth not return, and desires and endeavors for to do it; but what if it be hard, and it seem impossible to be better? Now he falls down, and thinks this is an infirmity which God will pardon, and so Satan conquers him; I say again,

not temptation, but Satan conquers him; for then a man is conquered when faith is conquered. 1 John v. 4. Then faith is conquered when returning to Christ with the whole heart is conquered; the whole heart returns not until a man's will resolves by being pressed with a necessity of a return, and staying there. Now, therefore, the Spirit of God puts the soul upon a necessity of returning to the Lord, that when the heart saith, It can not be that ever your heart should be better, or the Lord help; It must be, saith the soul again, and it is so, I am not able to bear this evil, for mercy must help, and Spirit must draw, and hence the soul must come. Ps. xlii. 7, 8. The soul thinks mercy can and is willing, but will it? Why, the Lord commands it, when one wave calls in for another, mercy must step in, and hence my prayer is to thee. Now, this necessity of returning to the Lord appears chiefly in breaking down all oppositions against its return, which are four.

1. Sometime snares of the world and other things beside. The Lord easeth them, the Lord sends no crosses, gives them their heart's desire, under which vines they rest; yet if the Lord takes not all from them, he puts such a cloyedness in them, that the soul can not but return to the Lord again; it can not live on such coarse bread, things that satisfy not; it had better once. Eccles. ii. 3, 4, 11.

2. Fears and discouragements of spirit; for when delivered from snares, then fears come, and discouragements, either by reason of outward losses, or the Lord's anger; so that the soul fears it never had, never shall have any mercy, that hath thus abused it; and it hath thought God himself to say so, and his behavior in not hearing and helping in so long a time, to witness so; yet it will return, though the Lord never save it, it will not sin. Jonah yet looks again to the temple, when he could not come to it, yet he would look to it. The soul will turn up its eyes and mourn, O, that I have so abused the Lord and mercy, that love itself should be angry and frown! Ps. lxxvii. The Psalmist "refused to be comforted." Verse 2. Nay, (verse 3,) though "he remembered God," and all his love past, yet troubled, this brought a greater trouble, yet, (verse 10,) "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." Saul did not thus.

3. Thoughts of impossibility and unlikelihood to get peace or pardon, or victory over sin now. For some time the saints think, the Lord loves me, and yet let these evils lie here, but I can get no help now, especially if after many prayers. I know help against all sins they can not get, and hence are humbled, but

against them sins that help can be got, wherein the Lord hath done it for others, and which make, the Lord estrange himself, it must be had, (for this temptation to a saint is a hypocrite's overthrow.) Ps. xviii. 21–23. If earth can not help, can not heaven? What, not the Spirit, word, blood, mercy of a tender-hearted Redeemer? What though not now; yet I will not give him over.

4. When God's providence seems to cross his promise, yet they will cleave to him or return to him. For many times saints have their estates in the bonds of God's promises, and hence they wait for accomplishment of them; but the Lord carries it quite cross to his promise to their seeming. He promiseth to make alive, to comfort, to sanctify, to be with me; and he kills, sads, lets out sin, never such a heart, and forsakes me. O, now faith shakes, yet they will not away. Heb. xi. 15, 16. The Lord calls them to forsake their country; Abraham is a stranger there, and that among cutthroat Canaanites, and dwells in tabernacles, and four hundred years after his posterity being afflicted should have it; yet he would not return, though they might, God had said here, "I will bless thee," so here. The murmuring Israelites fell short of this.

III. Whenever the soul doth depart, yet the Spirit of God is ever in it, and with it. Ps. lxxiii. 2. The Psalmist "almost fell." Why did he not? "Thou art ever with me; thy hand," (ver. 23) "hath upheld me." So that as the Spirit keeps the soul to Christ, so it keeps Christ in the soul at all times. And hence saints in the closure of all their dealings with God, and he with them; they have seen his love, working good in all, that now the soul can say, Lo, "the Lord was here, and I knew it not." Is. xxv. 9, 10. That the soul admires sometimes, and hence, after all, sees the Lord more clearly, and fully, and sweetly, till at last it sees him in glory. Thus you see the Spirit that follows saints is with them, which the world wants. O, admire at the Lord, if this Spirit be given, that heaven is come down into thy hell! That no miseries, no sins can part, but it is ever putting thee in thy way again. Hence, when,—

1. They are ready quite to fall off, and give themselves for gone, ready to be made away by temptation, or to make away themselves, the Lord is with them then. Ps. xciv. 18. At the time of parting, love appears.

2. Hence, when they are sometime so far gone, as that they mind not their return, or believe not, as in the wilderness, but are well enough without the Lord, the Lord, before they think

or desire, prevents them; (Ps. xxiii. 6,) "Mercy and truth follow me."

3. Hence, when they think the Lord is provoked that he can not save, then he is in the midst of his people; (Jer. xix. 11,) "Why art thou as a man astonished that can not save?"

4. Hence, at the end of life, all the ways of God have been peace, and all our ways, though evil, turned for good; as in Jonas his departing; and by miseries we are yet humbled; something the Lord is doing now for eternity; (Micah vii. 8,) "Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me."

5. Hence, when the heart and strength fail, and faith is failing, and the heart feels nothing but pain, yet the Lord then keeps, and this is comfort. Ps. lxiii. 26.

Consider, therefore, your estate, that, —

1. Do depart with your whole heart from the Lord. Hath not the Lord bowed thy heart toward himself, by mercies, by blows? But when sorrows have been passed, and mercies grown common, and truth common, thou hast started back like a broken bow which was bent backward, when stretched forward. And now when God calls to any duty, especially when thy will and ends are crossed, that is a burden, and thou art drawn to that as a fish to the dry land. It is like a fever fit to thee, and never mournest for this. But when any matter of gain and world is presented, all thoughts, time, strength is too little there, that you smell of the field; or if there be any life or joy, yet "the lean kine eat up the fat kine." Nay, mournest thou not under that cursed bent, which carries thee from the Lord. Know it, thou art forsaken of the Lord.

2. Thou that in times past hadst many affections, but now sorrow is gone, and seeking of the Lord gone; and being fallen, seest it not, but thinkest it is with thee as with other Christians, hast only the old work past, and some new pangs now and then. Why is it thus? Jer. viii. 4, 5. Will you fall and not arise? Will you let the Lord turn from you and not return? Doth the "stork know when winter is near, and not you your season"? O, look to it! What, are you fallen with a perpetual backsliding? Why will you not return, but go away with a perpetual backsliding? Know Satan hath hold of this soul.

3. You people of God, wonder you at this grace. Let your experience prove it. Is it not so, that a habitation of devils should be a house of the Spirit of God, not to sojourn, but dwell there, and though abused, vexed, yet it will not depart?

Section V.

V. Sanctification, in the room of self-seeking.

This work of the Spirit hath had many scratches, and passed under divers censures, that if that question should be asked of it, which once Christ made concerning himself, "Whom say men that I am?" we shall find five several apprehensions of it.

1. Some have made it common, and that this treasure may be digged out of dunghills, that the Lord casts these pearls to swine, that a carnal heart may have all these gifts and graces which the righteous have, and Adam had, and perish at last. And hence no evidence from it at all.

2. Some have not made it thus common, but proper to the elect, and that none are justified but they are sanctified, and *e contra*. But it hath been, and they think it is so disguised with the mixture of sin and temptation, and can not be known or very hardly. If so, that though the Lord Jesus "come into his own," and dwell not only in their houses, but in their hearts, yet they know him not.

3. Some say it may be known, but not as dwelling in our hearts, but as inherent in Christ, making the inherent grace of Christ in Christ himself to be our sanctification, which the apostle makes to be our righteousness. And so as the Papists abolish Christ's righteousness for justification, by making it to consist only in infusion of grace in us, these abolish Christ to be our sanctification, by making all our sanctification to consist in inhesion in Christ out of us.

4. Some say there is a sanctification in us; but wherein doth it consist? Not in any habitual holiness, or graces in us, but in the immediate actings of Christ in us; and so the Lord makes his music without any strings, and reveals things to us without eyes, and makes us live without any power of life. And so after justification they put a Christian in such an estate of sanctification as that he is a mere patient, in next disposition to move if he be moved. Like a weathercock which hath no power at all to move, but as the wind blows it, good or bad.

5. Some grant that there is a sanctification proper to the faithful, and in the faithful an habitual holiness, and consisting in a most blessed, inward, total change. But when they come to the application of this to themselves, they think that if they have some reformation, with some inward affection, they think every overly change is sanctification, and this must be a good evidence to them. And so, like some herbalists that treat of the sovereign excellencies of several herbs, but when they come to gather

them in the garden, they take their counterfeits in the room of them. The cause of which variety of apprehensions is the rareness of it, (and, therefore, it is unknown,) and the corrupt experience of men.

I shall, therefore, lay level these things, by showing you what that measure of sanctification is which is in us, and which is peculiar to the elect, and which also may be known by them which have it; and, therefore, shall not speak of sanctification at large, which is the change of the whole man by the death of Christ, whereby he is separated from sin, and sin mortified in him; and by the life of Christ, whereby he is dedicated unto Christ, and lives his life. But I shall treat of it now so far forth, especially as this change may be known by it; and therefore I oppose it to self-seeking.

Quest. But why do you oppose sanctification to self-seeking?

Ans. 1. Because this sanctification I now speak of, it is so far forth as it may be seen; now it is seen here chiefly, because it may be said here it is. But hypocrites have a change. Wherein may it be known to be different from theirs? Why, the change of the heart chiefly appears in the change of the utmost end.

2. Because as the pollution of the whole man, and all his actions, civil, moral, and religious, consist chiefly and appear in this self-seeking, or making ourselves our utmost end. This makes the most glorious actions vile, and stains them all. So the sanctification of a man consists chiefly and appears in making the Lord our utmost end of all we do. So that though the actions be never so mean and poor, yet this puts a glory and luster on them, and is the crown of them, even of the "giving of a cup of cold water." Matt. vi. 22. "If thy eye be single." Look, therefore, as before the Lord justifies the soul, every man living seeks himself as his last end and good; and out of this captivity no power can redeem them. Dan. iv. 30; Gen. xi. 4. So after it the Lord sanctifies the soul with such a measure of his grace as makes the Lord his utmost end. And this no other have.

Let me, therefore, show you what this sanctification is more fully, and with all the chief ingredients in it, that so it may be the better known.

It is the renovation of the whole man, appearing in the change of a man's utmost end. But more particularly, —

It is that work of the Spirit in the soul, whereby the soul beholding the glory of Christ, and feeling his love, hereupon closeth with the whole will of Christ, and seeketh to please him, as his happiness and utmost end.

For look as in self-seeking there are four things.

1. A man beholds himself and some good in himself.
2. Loves himself abundantly.
3. Pleaseth his own will.
4. Doth this as his utmost and last end. So here, in this description of sanctification, which I oppose chiefly to self-corruption, are four things.

1. The soul beholds the Lord in all his glory, seeing of him, present with him in all his glory, and set before him. Ps. xvi. 8. For this is one necessary ingredient to his sanctification and seeking the Lord as his utmost end. For why doth a man seek himself? He sees some glory and good in himself, none in the Lord. And hence we say of some men, whose pride spoils their parts, they know themselves too well; and hence saints, when they see their own vileness, and see the Lord they are so far from seeking as that they loathe themselves. Therefore, when the Lord reveals himself to the soul in glory, this makes them seek him, and not themselves; (1 Cor. i. 30,) "Christ is made wisdom, righteousness," etc., "that all might glory in him." For this is the glory of Christ, and the first principle of seeking the Lord, the soul sees his good laid up in the Lord more than in himself; nay, wholly in the Lord, not at all in himself. His wisdom is in him; he can not but wilder till utterly lost without him. His righteousness is in him; he could never have one sin pardoned by angels' holiness without him. His sanctification is in him; he could not have the least thought nor desire, but the Lord must work it in him. His redemption is in him; there could not be freedom one hour from unknown evils but by him. Hence, seeing him such a one, he seeks him. As why do men seek men, especially if great? Why do men desire to stand before princes, and please them, so that they will not gladly offer them the least distaste? Because they see them before them, beholding of them, apt to be angry, if displeased; and their greatness awes them. So here. Why is not the Lord Jesus pleased? He is not seen in his glory, nor made really present; and hence Rev. v. 12, 13. When they saw him "on his throne, they cast down their crowns and gave him glory."

2. The soul also feels his love, and so abundantly loves him again. For how come men to seek themselves in every thing, and they can not but do it? It is because they love themselves, and that abundantly, necessarily, as fire burns; so though they burn so hot in this love, that at last they consume themselves. So how do any, can any seek the Lord? We know the apostle saith, (1 Cor. xiii. 5,) "Love seeks not her own." When the

Sun hath put out this fire of our self-love, when the sense of the Lord's love hath kindled that love to the Lord again, as that it abundantly loves Christ, now it will seek the things of Christ, and not its own things. And as there is abundance of self-love, that men are eaten up with it, so there must be much love, which must be abundantly shed in the heart, so as to eat up that, arising from the sense of the Lord's love, and that abundantly. For many a man comes to have some good will, and affection, and love to the Lord, but yet never comes to seek the Lord as his last end, and live to him. Why? Because he hath not tasted abundantly of the Lord's mercy, grace, and love. Ps. lxxxvi. 12, 13. And hence the incomparable spirit of Paul, "I seek not yours, but you." Wherein? In being "willing to spend." But, save yourself, Paul. Nay, "and to be spent." With much ado? Nay, "most gladly." Though you love me not, because I love you. So here, though Christ should not love it, yet he is worthy; he hath done enough, and now the soul will not only do, but rejoice; nay, in sufferings; because his love is not dropped, but shed in our hearts. And hence it is a never-failing rule, little love or assurance of it, little seeking the Lord; much assurance, much seeking him.

3. Hereupon the soul closeth with the whole will of Christ, and pleaseth it, because it pleaseth him. It is with every man as it was with Samson; he would needs have a wife of the Philistines. Why so? Judg. xiv. 3. Because "she pleaseth me." So, why will men seek themselves, save themselves, love themselves, and please their own wills? Because it pleaseth them. Look, therefore, as the soul when he loved himself did seek to please only his own will in every thing, and it is good, because it pleaseth me; so the soul, whose heart is now endeared to Christ, though he can not perfectly do it, (that is in heaven,) yet he seeks to give the whole will of Christ content, because it pleaseth Christ. And this is that God hath sworn his people shall have, (Luke i. 74, 75,) "And that Christ hath delivered us from all our enemies," (for the great reason why men cleave not to the Lord, and please, which we account friends, which are the Lord's enemies, Satan and world,) "to serve him without fear;" i. e., in love and "in holiness and righteousness;" i. e., his whole will "all our days." And hence, (Eph. v. 8, 9,) "They were darkness, but now are light;" by faith, now there is sanctity; "walk as children of light." Wherein consists that? "Proving what is acceptable to God." Hence, (Eph. vi. 6,) they should "please Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." And this is so necessary, that (Gal. i. 10) the apostle saith, "If I please

men," i. e., their wills, "I am not Christ's." And this is "walking worthy of the Lord, pleasing him in all things;" and this is fruit, the end of the tree and leaves also, and differencing a tree from all other, that be beautiful, but barren. Col. i. 10.

Quest. But why do you make this to consist in pleasing the whole will of Christ, and not of God the Creator?

Ans. 1. Because our sanctification now can not please God as a Creator, though it may please him that is the Creator in Christ, because only perfect holiness can please him.

2. Because Christ hath pleased the Father by the holiness of himself; now, this being done, and therefore God having put all things into his hands, having done that for us, we are to give content to him. And herein our sanctification is differing from the image Adam had, who, in closing with the will of God, looked upon him as a Creator; ours respects a Redeemer, who hath bought us to himself, and hence we are to respect him in our actions now.

Quest. But why doth the soul close with the whole will of Christ, i. e., so far as it is made known?

Ans. First. Because the holiness of Christ here chiefly discovers itself, and against this a carnal heart will discover itself. For Capernaites may boast in and give entertainment to the person of Christ, but when they come to repent (which was one part of his will) that they did not, that they would not; "Woe therefore to thee Capernaum." As many will close with Christ for pardon of sin, and lay their sacks on him; but you must burden yourselves with them, or the Lord will never ease you of them. O, no; and hence they have light sorrow for sin: many will embrace the comforts of Christ, and love of Christ, and this joys them; yet the will of Christ, that is wearisome to them. Rom. viii. 8. They will pick and choose.

Secondly. Because this discovers a deep ditch of deceit in the heart, many take up some duties; and why do they do them? Because they please the Lord, and the Lord commands, and for his sake, when indeed it is to please themselves; for in other things they care not whether they please the Lord or no.

Thirdly. Because this closing with his whole will only gives the Lord content; as it is not the strings, or striking upon one string, that makes the music, but striking on them all according to rule; so here. And hence, when they sacrificed and observed new moons; (Is. i. 14,) "Who hath required these things at your hands?" Hence, when the people begin to put the Lord off with mean performances, any common stuff, the Lord takes state upon him, and saith he is a king, (Mal. i. 14; and 9, 10,) "I have no pleasure in you."

Fourthly. Because this only will give peace; and, therefore, let any man begin to pick and choose, and his heart die to the Lord's will; if, Jonah like, he will fly from any way of the Lord's, and continue there, he shall have storms; and hence, (1 John ii. 3–5,) "Hereby we know him," etc.

4. He closeth with the whole will of the Lord as his happiness and utmost end; as a man made himself his last end before, and desired God and Christ only to keep his sores from aching, for so I look upon all men made up of wants; if the body ache with cold, stomach with hunger, head for want of sleep, conscience for sin, all happiness lies in easing hereof, and here lies their bliss. So now the soul makes the life of the Lord its happiness to live unto him. Gal. ii. 10. He makes it his meat and drink to do the Lord's will; for Jehu sought the Lord, but his last end was himself; as, (John xvi. 2,) "A man may kill, and think he doth God good service;" but that is not his last end; a carnal heart may cross his own will, but not his own utmost end, as Judas; a man may seek the Lord with delight, and follow the ordinances, and fast, and pray, but himself is his end still. Zach. vii. 5, 6. Is. lviii. 4, 5, As a man that goes to a city, he will do your business, but he would not go unless he had his own ends to bring about there. But those that are truly sanctified make the Lord their last end and happiness. It is not only good to do the Lord's will, (for thus men may seek the Lord,) as thinking it good so to do, but as their blessedness, else it is not their last end, and so not sought as their last end; and so it is with the soul. As a river runs to the sea, many springs run into it, and it carries them down all into it, so there are many occasions, hinderances, businesses, yet it carries them all down with it, even the more violently the more it is hindered; (Ps. cxix. 126, 127,) "Therefore love I them above gold." And this expresseth itself in three things:—

1. In admiring the glory of the Lord, and his will and ways, and accounting them happy men, and blessed, that thus can and do live. For some time the soul is decayed and fallen from this, or sick and weak; now it accounts them happy that have health and strength to walk abroad. Ps. i. 1, 2.

2. In being never at rest in his mind until now that he comes to this; for therein a man's making any thing his last end appears; as he made his goods his last end. Luke xii. 19. Now, therefore, my soul, be at rest; for there is no seeing the Lord, but self-seeking hinders: now, though it be thus, yet do I make myself my last end? then my mind would be at rest; but if satisfied, it is not at rest till now; and hence Paul, when he had

run this race, now you see him leaning upon his pillow. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. And hence saints are loth to die and be blessed in heaven, because they have done so little work as yet; little do the saints for the Lord many times, yet their hearts are upright; for what mourn they for so much as this, when they have looked upon it? O that the Lord hath been a loser by them!

3. It carries the soul through all difficulties with power and delight. Prov. x. 29, "The way of the Lord is strength to the righteous, and joy." Rom. vii. 22, "I do delight in the law of God in the inner man." Other nations walk "in the name of their gods, we in ours." Micah iv. 5. As when wealth or honor is a man's utmost end, with what violence are men carried to it! and hence a man thinks he hath never such good days as then, when he can do much for the Lord; and hence when any duty is to be done, when fearful to do it, or loth to perform it, when the heart is dead, yet beholding it with a spiritual eye, that this gives Jehovah honor. O, this carries the soul headlong even into miseries; "Not my will, but thine be done." This easeth the heart even in the belly of hell, and in times of the deepest desertion.

To this sanctification all the saints do come, every one in their measure; and if ever the soul tasted the Lord's love, or ever was humbled with the bitterness of sin, the first voice and main care is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Nay, though no assurance, and it can not joy in the Lord's love, yet it will in the Lord's will; and hence when it hath full assurance, yet finding such a vile heart, if God should give it heaven with such a heart it would be death: and hence when he thinks of going to hell, yet there (saith he) let me bless thee.

This sanctification all unsound hearts do want; much reformation, much affection, many duties; but their end is not changed, though their lives be, and hearts seem to be.

1. Because they can not love the Lord, because the Lord doth never shed his love into their hearts.

2. This was the life of Christ, (John viii. 20,) of which life they that are dead in sin never have one act, though they may think they have.

3. This is the end of our election, which, therefore, an unsound heart may as soon attain to, as to elect, or to be elected of God, (Eph. i. 4,) "holy in love."

This may easily be known: 1. Can not a man know when he is happy? 2. Can not Peter tell Christ that he loves him? 3. Can not a man tell whether he be a hypocrite or no? For he that can not prove his utmost end is changed must confess him-

self a hypocrite, yet his heart was never changed, whatever assurance or peace he hath had. A thing is never good till it serves its end it was made for.

O, therefore, look that you content not yourselves with reformation, but come to this; else, 1. You lose all your obedience, the Lord regards it not, the Lord will take all from you; as vessels that are made to hold wine, and they can not, lay them by, "The Lord hath no pleasure in you." Mal. i. 8–10. 2. If you do, the Lord will accept your poorest and meanest services. Consider —

1. Christ cast by his robes, being privy to his own worth, to become obedient. Phil. ii. 6, 8.

2. His infinite wisdom is in every command, though thy carnal reason like it not.

3. His infinite love for thy good, though thou thinkest it is for thy hurt.

4. His glory, though thou gettest no good at all by it.

Section VI.

VI. Fullness of the Spirit of glory in the room of the world. "Whom the Lord doth justify, those he doth glorify," (Rom. viii. 30,) i. e., with the glory of another world, which, though it be hid for a time from others, and sometimes from themselves, yet they do partake of it now, and it shall be revealed upon them another day. 1 Pet. v. 1. Now, though hypocrites may taste of the word, nay, of the powers of the world to come, yet they fall short of this measure of glory. And I say, this fills them in the room of this world.

Quest. How are men full of the world, and what is the Spirit of glory?

Ans. I shall show this in three conclusions: —

Concl. 1. That the full rest and peace of the soul is to be found only in the presence of God Almighty, in this Being of beings. His perfections are in himself, and hence he keeps a perpetual Sabbath of rest in himself; in this rest only the soul of man can find rest. Heb. iv. 6, 10; Ps. xvi. 11. He is the journey's end of all a man's labors, and life, and travels. Hence (John xvii. 13) when Christ's work was ended, now I come not to heaven so much as to thee. And hence when Solomon had tired out himself in his travels through all the things of this world, to find rest, he returns empty and crying home, and now, when he sums up his glory, (Eccles. i. 1, 2,) he styles himself, —

1. A man gathered to the church, to be as near God as he can.

2. "The Son of David," to whom the promises were made.

And then, 3. "Kings of Jerusalem," the last and least. He is that house and home of his people, whether in fleeting or settled condition, from one generation to another. Ps. xc. 1. So that the prophet, finding this to be most true, I say, stands astonished at men; and because men had deaf ears here, and their bellies could not hear, he cries to the heavens to be astonished at this. Jer. ii. 12, 13. This wine the Lord puts under his lock and key; it is not to be found in earth, in church liberties, you may soon see this temple, not one stone left on another, nor in heaven simply, nor in fellowship of angels; only it is in the Lord, drawing nigh to the soul in these, and drawing the soul, at last, near to himself by these.

Concl. 2. That all reprobates, being estranged from God, and God from them, are also strangers to this rest, this life of God, this life of glory, (Eph. iv. 18,) and, therefore, seek for it and suck it out of the paps of the creature, and that which is not God. And thus their hearts are full of the world; (Ps. xvii. 14,) "Dust they eat, and upon their bellies they go;" shift for it where they will, they shall never find it in him; and if they do find it any where else in this world, let them fill themselves to the full, for they have their portion, they have their reward. And hence they do (all unregenerate men living) find their rest in something out of God; rest to their consciences in duties, and something of God; rest to their hearts in some creatures, either unlawful or lawful. Matt. xxiv. 38. And there is never a carnal heart, but give him his imaginary content here, and he would desire to live here as an exile from God, and to be without him, if there were no hell, no plagues, etc. For here is their treasure, not above; here are thy good things; and this is the very reason why a man lives without God, nay, when he stands convinced of it, nay, when troubled with thoughts of this, and no duties can ease him, because something out of God is his bottom to stand upon, and his rest and peace; it may be meat, drink, health, sleep, occasional delights, and a quiet life. That as it is with seamen, they can endure winds and weather, and rent sails, and torn masts, because they live upon that trade, another will not; so it is here. Though many troubles of mind, yet they ply that oar, it is their living.

Concl. 3. That all those whom the Lord intends good unto, those he calls in time out of this world into his eternal glory of rest and peace, out of this world into another. And as their hearts were filled with another world before, so their hearts are filled with the glory of this other world now. John xvii. 14, 16;

1 Pet. v. 10. And this rest and peace in God is the glory of the saints. That look as it is with reprobates, what is their last and great woe? 2 Thess. xix. "It is separation from the Lord;" so this is the great glory of the saints, to enter into him, as Moses did into the cloud, and so to rest in him. "I go to my God and your God." Hence the saints are said to "sell away all for this treasure," for this pearl, for the Lord; and so the Lord is instead of all, and better to them than all they had before. They can live royally upon him, having but one thing to look to, and having all things in this one thing; and more royally than the princes of the world can upon their lusts and earthly treasures. This is the rest and peace the saints have; (Heb. iv. 3,) "They that believe do enter into rest." God calls them out of the world by some bitterness of it, or by some cloying and surfeiting, and making their hearts weary of the sweetness thereof, and then they enter into glory. The Lord sees nothing can fill their hearts nor stop their cries but him, and now this sea of glory breaks in upon them, and fills their hearts; and this the Lord doth two ways, according as there are two things in that good that fills the heart.

1. Proportion.
2. Propriety.

So there are two rays of eternal glory chiefly, whereby the Lord gives full rest and peace, and so glory to his people.

1. He reveals the good they are to enjoy in another world, in its full proportion, viz., "what is the riches of the inheritance of the saints." Eph. i. 17, 18. For no good satisfies till it is known in its greatness, though yet there be degrees of this. For we shall see many Christians have assurance, where is the joy of it? Not affected with it, because he knows not what it is at that time. At another time his heart is above all the world, because he sees what is that glory the saints have, and that he hath it, it swallows him up and confounds him. Why me, Lord! And this is the reason why the saints doubt, whom the Lord hath loosened from their lusts and all things here. What so vile, and all that mine? And this is the reason why, when doubting, so that there is nothing in this world that doth quiet them, nothing from God that doth ease them, yet their hearts are sweetly eased. Their desires are after him, and their delights in his company; better go to hell thus than in my sins; and the thoughts of the Lord are sweet, because he hath and doth secretly fill their hearts. Something they have or do see in him. Is. xxvi. 8. And hence is the reason of the sorrows of them, when their hearts are worst,

now though they have the world, yet are not at rest, because they have and do see something of this.

2. He reveals by the spirit and light of glory that this good is theirs, their propriety. The first gives rest to the soul, viz., the spirit of vision incompletely. This spirit of faith, whereby the soul knows all this good is mine, this gives it completely. Now, the new Jerusalem is come down from heaven, and God is among men. 1 Pet. i. 8. For if a Christian sees the greatness of this glory, but not as his, the soul will never cleave to the Lord indeed, nor find full rest; and hence, when the riches of God's grace is revealed, and the feast set before them, they do not eat, because they fear they were not bidden. Now, both these give full peace and rest to the soul, when the soul hath the Lord Jehovah in his arms, and hence he cares not now when death comes. O, it shall be a welcome day to them. And hence they wish they might sin no more, or cease to be. And hence they wish they could set even the whole world a-wondering. Was it ever heard since the world began of such a pattern of mercy? It is true, the Lord, indeed, keeps his servants for a time under much darkness and doubts; but it is certain, even in the meanest saints, this light is sown for them, and "joy for the upright in heart," and some work there is for the Lord to do for them, and then he keeps a Sabbath of rest in them.

Quest. But have not many hypocrites their joys, their peace, their glory?

Ans. Yes; they have some tastes and likeness to this, but want this indeed; and the difference appears in three particulars.

1. The peace, and joy, and assurance of that glory which eye never saw in the saints, it is from the witness of the Spirit of glory; not only because that God is their God, but because they are his people. It is, I say, from the witness of God in his word, not from themselves, nor from man only that they approve me, nor from dreams and diabolical breathings, but from the Spirit of God, he brings tidings of it, and from such a Spirit (that you may know it) that not only shows you God is your God, and so you rejoice because of this, for thus it is with many a carnal heart, and he hath peace, being in horror, from this, the Lord loves me; but he makes you to rejoice because you are the Lord's people, because he hath changed your heart, now the peace is found, and joy is right; and here I would try the peace of any man; God hath witnessed pardon to thee, but hath he showed thee thou art his? If so, be thankful. But here is the doubt, for it may be the change is not right. And hence those two are

ever joined together. Zach. xiii. 9; John xiv. 20–22. Horror lies heavy, hence love is sweet; sin lies heavy, hence this witness, they are changed, they are subdued, and shall be so, this is sweet also.

2. The rest and peace the saints have, it is not only from God, but in him. It is with the soul as with a malefactor imprisoned and condemned; the jailer comes and tells him that he hath his pardon here brought him from the king; how shall it be proved whether it be a device of his own brain or no? Why, if it be of the jailer's own devising, he will never lead him before the king, but from him he shall be carried. But if the messenger carry him before the king, and sets him down before him, and as it was with Joseph, his prison garments are put off, and he stands before the king, and glories in his presence, now it is right. So many have peace, and Satan sets them at liberty, but carries them from God. But when there is a witness of peace from him, and then you stand before him, now it is from heaven. Ps. xxxvi. 7, 8. There is peace from him and peace in him; (Ps. xxxvii. 4,) "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." When it is thus, all you desire is granted.

3. The peace the saints have, both from God and in God, fills them with everlasting content and peace. Rom. xv. 13. Is. xi. 9, "Filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The earth is the rest of the waters, and the waters fill all its empty place. So it is here; the soul is the rest of the Lord, (Is. xi. 10,) and he fills their empty hearts. A malefactor may dream he is before the king, when he hath his fetters on his legs; but his dream feeds him not, but when he awakes, he is hungry. And so it is with many a carnal heart that is a dream for a time, but he meets not with eternal satisfaction. Ps. lxv. 4, and Ps. xc. 14. And hence men, after they have had their peace, grow more bold to sin, and more impenitent in sin, and more worldly than ever before, because they have not everlasting joy; as those (Is. xxxv. 10,) "Everlasting joy shall be upon their head," (whereas a carnal heart hath soon enough of God,) not everlasting, without intermission of joy, for they must have their nights and tears, as well as their day and joys; but everlasting without decay of joy; that though they have their tears, yet God wipes them away; there is nothing else; their joy, their peace, and so their hearts are forever satisfied here. As Christ, when he knew it was "finished, now he gave up the ghost," so when the soul finds he is come, now it dies to the world, and makes its

perpetual abode in him. Others will have their carrion, and their stolen waters, how clean soever they wipe their mouths.

Object. 1. But have not the saints many sorrows, reproaches, persecutions?

Ans. Rom. viii. 18, "They are not worthy the glory to be revealed." 2 Cor. iv. 17, "They work a weight of glory," and in these they glory. O, "the Lord's love is shed in their hearts." Rom. v. 3, 5.

Object. 2. But have they not many losses, and wants, and straits? and then where is their joy?

Ans. A carnal heart he murmurs indeed, and sinks and dies away; but it is not so here. Hab. iii. 17, 18. A saint takes it out in him, in the Lord, it makes all the world too narrow for him. Others are burnt and consumed in the fire, but so is not he that hath the Son of God with him.

Object. 3. But he hath many sins and temptations.

Ans. 1 Pet. i. 5–7, "You greatly rejoice in the salvation reserved for you, though now your faith have a precious trial by manifold temptations."

Object. 4. But are not the hearts of the saints taken off from the Lord, and taken up with other things?

Ans. No, never as carnal men's are; (Tit. ii. 12,) "For God's grace, that hath appeared to them, teacheth them to deny worldly lusts," as we deny children their asking. They may greedily carry the soul by fits from the Lord, but he denies them their fill in any creature, and calls them all to "come up hither." He denies them, as we do beggars, entrance, and if they do enter, he denies them lodging; they shall not have good looks from him. Every vile heart hath either a proud, or worldly, or covetous heart, and these lusts being urgent and entreating long, he can not deny them the best room he has. O, it is the woe of men! they can not but do thus.

But thus you see this world is cast out, and glory comes in to all saints. O, this world is the cause of all sin.

1. Why do men neglect duties in secret?

2. Sleep at meetings?

3. Though so fair abroad, yet passionate at home, and storms there?

4. Whence are wars and wranglings about rates and lots? O, this world.

5. Whence apostasy? It is not with you as in former times, worse now than in persecution; and sermon-proof now? O, this world. Whence is hardness of heart? O, something of the

world easeth you. And whence is it that men with rich stocks are goodly things, and wondered at; and holiness, and walking with God, and things of heaven are nothing? O, this evil world. "O, adulterers and adulteresses," know you not that you hate the Lord, and the Lord you? It is the cause of all thy sin; but see withal it is the cause of all thy sorrow, heaven and the glory of that would enter, but for it, but that it can not, because thou art full of it. O, poor creatures, take your farewell quickly of it, or the Lord will meet with you for it. Cry to the Lord! O, call me to come up unto thyself.

Thus you see the fullness of the Spirit which the saints have; and, therefore, that conceit, that saints have nothing whereby to discern them, let it forever perish and rot.

Section VII.

Use 4. *Of Exhort.* Take heed you fall not short of the grace of God, of the promise and Spirit of grace. Heb. xii. 15. O, get oil in your vessels! When there is much counterfeit gold abroad, every man will have his scales, and not only look and rub, but he will weigh every piece he takes. Was there ever more counterfeits abroad, or such similitudes of the truth? Insomuch as some, in their opinions, think it impossible; others, in their practices, find it hard and very difficult to distinguish the one from the other. O, but there is a vast distance and difference! As ever you look for mercy, get this oil in your vessel; as ever you look for peace, know that you have it in your vessel. I am persuaded that there is never a soul that follows the Lord tremblingly and tenderly, but when he hears of this, sends up his sighs, Good Lord, let me not fail here; better never have had thy name in my forehead, nor affection in my heart, than to want oil in my vessel. And I am persuaded he trembles to think, What if I should perish at the last? And yet how many never have strong fears of failing here, that have most cause so to do! This parable is directed to virgin churches at the last period of the decrepit world; wherein, methinks, the Lord Jesus speaks unto his people; there is much profession, affection; but, O, take heed you perish not for want of oil in your vessel. Let all your care be to get that, and fear to want that, wherein the Lord doth answer that fear, and question, and thought of his people. O, what if I should perish at last! Get oil in your vessel, then; and if the Lord Jesus had been of that mind that there are no inherent graces in the saints, or so dim they can not be known, or, if known, you are not to respect them as any signs, but to

look for a witness of grace upon you, or out of you, without respecting or looking upon grace in you, he would never have recorded this parable, which, to wise virgins, is to prevent those conceits. O, therefore, how many fall short here, and regard not this!

1. Some fall short here, by trusting to and omnifying of Christ and grace, regarding not any grace within; they separate those things from one another which God hath joined, and which a gracious heart joins one to another. They respect not sanctification, faith, or vocation; they look to Christ, and can they honor Christ enough? Hence profess, they that regard those things have trusted to their frames of heart, and they scoff at them that look to be justified by faith. It is such a delusion as is likely "to deceive, if possible, the very elect." Look as it was with the Israelites. 1 Sam. iv. They were overthrown in the battle of the Philistines; but what is the cause? "O, send for the ark, where the strength and presence of God was." But what good did the ark do them with unhumbled hearts, that looked to that, and trusted to that, but mind not themselves? and hence, when Samuel bids them "turn from their idols, and serve the Lord only," now they do it; so here.

2. Some only look to the outside, like those that built the tombs and painted the sepulchers of the prophets. And hence, if they be inwardly zealous for external order, ceremony, ordinances, carriage in garments, speeches, etc., they think the bitterness of death is past, when, Agag-like, they are clad with such soft raiment; and hence, if there be transgression here, it is sad. But what if they walk with unbroken hearts? O, they respect not this. And so, their care being taken up in trimming and making the vessel bright, they neglect to get oil within.

3. Some fall short here by thinking this thought, that that grace which is inward is also sincere and unfeigned; and hence do not judge themselves profane or evil, because of their profession, nor yet hypocrites, because they do not make only an outward show, when as the deepest hypocrisy lies under much inward affection many times. And hence they take every such work upon trust, without weighing it; if double gilt, and there is no show of copper, put it up, never inquiring where the bounds of truth and hypocrisy part. And hence, if they have inward comfort, though by a dream, they take it. If upon their sick beds, after trouble, they have had peace, they take it on trust; if they have any promise of rest and peace, or feel some desires, love to ordinances, and God's people, they take hold on promises, and trust themselves without trying, without weighing. Sudden work is superficial.

4. Some feel a want of these things, and content themselves with desires, and so never come to be indeed what they desire to be. It is true, saints feel wants and desire supply; but, 1. They are never satisfied till it is so indeed. "My flesh is meat indeed." 2. They are humble and vile in their own eyes till the Lord help; but these, like Solomon's sluggard, "desire, and have not." Whereas, in things of lesser worth, they will not do so; they will not only desire, but, indeed, till the ground: if one neglects to till, though they answer, I desire, and God accepts that, every one will say he is deceived; their hunger is their food; they build the sluggard's nest of desire, and there sit. O, therefore, take heed you fall not short here. Take heed your prayers and desires prove not lazy and unfaithful messengers which you send to your friends to come and help you, and they go half way, and no farther, and never bring them to you indeed. O, therefore, get your oil in your vessels; do not only fear the Lord, "fear him greatly." 1 Sam. xii. 18. Do not only cleave to the Lord, but with the whole heart, and cleave to him only; beg this of the Lord. Look as poor people, when they come to rich men that have full heaps, do say, Let me have full measure; my family is poor, and charge great; so here.

Motive 1. Consider, if once you get this, it will never die, it shall increase exceedingly. It is a treasure you can not part withal, that you shall never grow poor with; but, (Luke viii. 18,) "From him that hath not shall be taken away that which he seemeth to have." O, many a one saith, I fear I shall fall at last, and I find my heart so soon cooled. O, get this, nothing shall quench it again. If you say, I can not keep it, I say, It shall keep you. Prov. ii. 10, 11. Not when you have Christ, and Spirit, and grace in your head, nor in your conscience to give you peace, but in your heart; and when nothing is sweet but that, nothing lies between your heart and that, it shall now preserve and keep thee, it shall follow thee, fill thee, seal thee, live with thee, go to heaven with thee, etc. Mark this, you feeble ones.

Motive 2. O, consider what a sad thing it will be to thy heart to miss of this and lose the Lord at last. The servants in Isaac's family did not mourn so much as Esau when the blessing was gone. Why? They never had hope of it, never were near it. He was so long in the field that the blessing was gone before he came, and he sold it away for a trifle. So they that never come so near the Lord and his blessing never will have such sorrow especially to think, I sold it away for a trifle. O, thought Esau, that I had come a little sooner! etc. When Saul went to Gilgal

to sacrifice, (1 Sam. xiii. 10,) "He staid seven days, and then sacrificed before the Lord;" but then his doom was passed by God. And it is said, presently Samuel came. O, if he had staid a little longer! So you will one day think, I sought and waited, but forsook the Lord. O, had I waited one day more, I had been well. This is the reason why the hypocrite's portion is heaviest in hell.

Motive 3. You will say, It will be heavy hereafter, but not now. Yes, now too, if you do consider the Lord Jesus is so full, and thou not to have one drop of that which is saving, even when you come for it. It was a heavy token of the Lord's anger, (1 Sam. xiv. 17,) "When the Lord answered not all that day," (when yet he did not speak bitter things against them,) because he did use to do it. It notes the anger of the Lord Jesus; as a man that hath abundance of bread, and yet gives not any, this argues he is very angry, if he continue so; and if so, how canst thou sleep under it?

Motive 4. Consider, else the Lord will try you. God hath his trying times, and they were never sent but to discover who were dross, who were gold, and the main end of all God's trials is to discover this truth that I now am pressing upon you. Some have a thorough work, and now the trial discovers the truth, as in Abraham. Heb. xi. 17. Some have superficial work, and they fall in trial, as Saul, and it doth discover it was but an overly work; for this is the question God makes, Is it thorough or no? Ay, saith a carnal heart; yes, saith a gracious heart. Hence it is strange to see what men will do when a trial comes. A man maintains a lust; he will not show it, nor defend it; he will turn to be of some opinion or other, and the corruption of his mind shall show the corruption of his heart. A man loathes the people of God, but he saith he loves them. Now, this shall be a sign — time shall come that some of them shall be matter of offence to him, and shall not honor him, it shall try him. A man loathes ordinances; he saith he doth not, but comes to the world's end to enjoy them. He shall have plenty of them, and some sad losses with them, and then you shall see he surfeits of them, never quickened by them, to show the work was but overly. A man's heart is above God; he saith he is content to be at the Lord's disposal; let him do any thing with him, this comforts him. He shall have a cross wife, or something that doth not please him, and now his heart quarrels, and thus he shall be tried, to show it was but overly work. Men despise the liberties the Lord gives them; they say they prize them. A general governor shall come with pretenses of religion and protection, and

you shall see this chaff will take old birds now. O, therefore, try yourselves here, and be sure you fall not short here.

Quest. What means are there to be used?

Ans. 1. Look that you make your vessels clear. It hath been said of old, and I believe it is a truth still, that the Lord will never send his Spirit to dwell in an unclean heart. Doves build not their habitations on dunghills. God's Spirit must come as an efficient to take it away, but not as an inhabitant to dwell in an unclean heart; (2 Tim. ii. 19–21,) "He that purgeth himself," (he doth not say, God must do all; but he, under God, searcheth and purgeth,) he shall "be a vessel of honor;" if from these things, especially from those sins which apostates are conquered with, of which he there speaks. For there be many sins a man may be purged from, and not be a vessel of honor. But what are the sins the apostates perish by? Mark them, find them out; one by pride, another by sloth, another by the world, etc. "He shall be a vessel of honor." Men see and confess, but make not work of it, indeed; the old heart is not better, you consume and languish still; (1 Cor. jx. 26, 27,) "I beat not the air;" i. e., I lay deadly blows upon my enemy, and "I beat down my body, lest," etc. Overly search of sin hath made overly decay of sin, and hence overly grace and affection. As a man hath not light, nor love, nor esteem enough, because he never felt his wound to the bottom. O, account it an inestimable mercy when it is thus. O, therefore, remember the rule of the prophet, (Jer. iv. 3, 4,) "Sow not among thorns," etc. Many men's profession springs up, but withers, never comes to perfection; this ground is not plowed, or if so, not thoroughly plowed, but thorns left to choke it. Well, saith the Lord, look to yourselves, lest "my wrath break out like fire." Why is the Lord dreadful here? O, because men are careless here. I look to Christ, and my desires are good; and I pray in secret, and I am much changed, etc.

2. Look that your vessel be never kept empty; when a man hath no grace, and sees how others can pray and mourn, and how far short he falls of them, it is easy now to be empty, as Saul when he was no king; but when the Lord hath given some light and affection, and some comfort, and some reformation, now a man grows full here. Saints do for God, and carnal hearts do something likewise; but a little fills them, and quiets them, and so damns them. And hence men, at the first work upon them, are very diligent in the use of means; but after that they be brought to neglect prayer, sleep out sermons, and to be careless, sapless, lifeless, who is the better for them? Because I say that now they have got something, the main work is wrought, they call not

that into question, and so, when God comes to reckon, they are found too light. O, therefore, keep the vessel empty, never content thyself with any measure. Hath the Lord called thee? Yes, I think so, and believe sometimes so, but I am afraid I may at last be found without oil in my vessel; be then every day, as if thou wert now to begin. And this I say, true grace, as it comforts, so it never fills, but puts an edge on the appetite; more of that grace, Lord! Thus Paul. Phil. iii. 13, 14. Thus David, "Out of my poverty I have given," etc. 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 17, 18.

It is a sure way never to be deceived in lighter strokes of the Spirit to be thankful for any, but to be content with no measure of it; and this cuts the thread of difference between a superficial, lighter stroke of the Spirit, and that which is sound.

3. Look that your vessel be not broken, nor cracked, that when the Lord pours in, it runs out again. Heb. ii. 1, 2; Prov. iv. 12, 13. O, here is the wound of many a man, he hath many affections in word, in ordinances, and they take hold on him to convince, to affect him; but he takes not fast hold on them, he keeps them not as his life, with thankfulness for any little, and with watchfulness. And hence a man is where he was, dry and barren. It is true, the Lord will not give that out of an ordinance which he doth in an ordinance. But it is one thing to have it lost out of thy hands and the Lord's hands likewise, another thing only to lose it out of thy hand. It is one thing for the Lord to withdraw it, another thing for thee to spend it away by the prevailing power of a lust, viz., either the world without, or contempt of grace within; you esteem it not as your life, and hence seek not to keep it, you will lose the oil in your vessels. And I am confident this is one reason why a man lives long under means, and never profits, the Lord sees if he should pour any thing into the heart, it would be lost. He takes fast hold of world or self, and keeps that, and hence all runs out again.

4. Look that you be at the cost to get this oil in your vessel. These virgins, when the door was shut and too late, would, but the time was past. For we shall find the reason why men's works are slight, their buildings, their garments; why, they will not be at the cost; so men's works of grace are slight, because they will not be at the cost. They find a want of grace, and prize it, and would fain have it, but it shall cost them little; they will not be at the cost of their time. Sometime they seek the Lord in an ordinance; but what if he comes not? They depart from him. Sometimes in pangs and fits, when the Spirit comes, they seek; but to be ever seeking, ever carrying sense of sin, it

is too much time and trouble; they will not be at the cost. Some affections and hearts they spend, but not their whole hearts. Hence Christ exhorts, O, "strive, because many seek, and are never able." Look, therefore, as it was with Jonathan, Saul (1 Sam. xiv. 45) said "he should die;" no, the people said, "not so, for he hath wrought with God this day." Not that a man can get grace by his own strength, but, (Col. i. 29,) "I strive according to his mighty working." Only let me add this: be at cost first to get the Lord Jesus himself; as, (Matt. xiii. 33,) "He sold all and bought the field;" and when he had the field, now he had the treasure. O, think no time too much, no lusts too dear, no affections too much for him, (and then you have all things with him, and shall receive life from him,) and not for a death, but for a living, risen Christ. Christ bestowed gifts on Judas, on Saul; but whom he bestowed himself upon, those never wanted any thing. Ps. xxiii. 1. But here I might take up a dreadful complaint. O, that men content themselves with colors and tinctures of truth and Spirit, etc. Some naturalists observe that brass would be gold, it tends to it, had it but more heat of the sun to concoct it, and to bring it to perfection; so it is with the lighter strokes of common grace.

CHAPTER XXII.

THAT TRUE SAVING GRACE IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS CAN NEVER FAIL.

SECTION I.

Observ. 4. That those graces of the Spirit wherewith those heavenly vessels or souls of the faithful are filled, are constant, and of an eternal nature.

For thus the wise virgins, their vessels were not only filled, but the oil was constantly preserved in them, and continued in their vessels, until they met the bridegroom. It is true their lamp went out; outward acts of the Spirit of grace, expressed in the profession of the saints, may be extinct for a time, yet the oil did remain in the vessel still, which was not so with those which were foolish; not only their lamps were out, but their oil was spent; so that here is a third difference between "the foolish and the wise virgins." That Spirit of grace in the one is of a dying, withering nature; in the other, of an eternal and everlasting nature. There is an eternal excellency stamped upon

them; (John iv. 14,) "The water that I shall give him shall be in him," no pools, but a perpetual living spring; (Heb. vi. 9,) "Some that were enlightened and tasted, fell away, but we are persuaded better things of you." The saints have better things, which do not cause, but accompany salvation. The Lord is so far from suffering it to die, as that he will add to it; (Luke viii. 18,) "To him that hath shall be given." Though it be like mustard seed, yet it shall grow; there is a growing virtue in it. But as the Lord speaks of his people; (Is. lxv. 8,) "As new wine is in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so it shall be here." Nay, though it be not so much as seen, yet the Lord then can see it, and doth then keep it, and will preserve it. Is. xl. 29–31. Nay, though opposed and resisted by temptation, yet (1 Pet. i. 6, 7) it is not consumed, but tried, that it may be to glory another day, notwithstanding manifold temptations. It is one of the greatest miracles in the world to preserve it, as a spark of fire in a sea of water. Nay, though it seems to a man's feeling to be quite quenched and put out, that a man finds no more than a reprobate, yet the seed of God remains, and it will break out again. There is life at the heart and sap at the root, yet the Lord will bring them again. When the Lord of glory was crucified, and all the disciples fled, not one spake for him, none durst confess him, yet the Lord returns to them, and they again to him.

Section II.

Quest. How comes it to be thus immortal and of an eternal nature?

Ans. 1. It is not only in regard of the power of grace received, though it were perfect; for then Adam had not fallen from it.

2. Nor in the freedom of a man from temptation; for then the angels had not fallen.

3. Nor yet in the power of a man's own watchfulness and care to keep it; for, "if the Lord keep not the city, the watchmen wake but in vain."

4. Nor yet in the power of any means; as many think, if under a powerful ministry, then they are out of danger. It is not in Paul, nor Apollos, but in the Lord. Men may rejoice in John's ministry, and be affected with it, but it is only for a season. But,—

I. In regard of the eternal election and purpose of God. Their constancy in the state of grace depends upon that immu-

tability of his counsel; (Matt. xxiv. 24,) "They shall deceive, if possible, the elect;" but it is not possible, they being elect. Wise men may have their brains crazed, and, Nebuchadnezzar-like, the use of reason gone, but the principle of reason continues, and the use of it in time returns again; and so it is in regard of damning delusions; (2 Tim. ii. 19,) "Hymeneus and Philetus fell;" hence do not the elect fall? No, for that foundation remains sure. 1. The certainty of their continuance in grace is built upon a foundation. 2. Not every weak one, but a firm foundation. 3. Not a foundation of man's laying, but God's. 4. Not a wavering and tottering, but standing foundation, and that sealed with the knowledge of God. "The Lord knows who are his," i. e., though some men fall, that one can not tell by outward expressions and profession who are the Lord's, yet "the Lord knows who are his," and they are sealed by his love and knowledge. And it seems this is the prime cause of the continuance of angels, (1 Tim. v. 21;) and election being free, for his own sake, not for their sakes, the Lord foresaw all their good and evil; hence they are not cut off.

II. In regard of the faithfulness, and promise, and covenant of God's grace. Adam had that covenant. If he did do, he should live; but he had no absolute promise he should do, or continue to do; but the faithful have; and hence they stand, not by the strength of grace, but by the strength of the covenant of grace. And hence that which to reason is incredible, to nature impossible, is brought about by faith; not by virtue of any power of a promise. God hath said it, and faith believes it; and hence Abraham's dead body begets; and Sarah's barren womb brings forth Isaac. Hence, through all the word, when the apostle persuades himself of their continuance, he ever puts in God's faithfulness, (1 Cor. i. 8, 9; 1 Thess. v. 24; 2 Thess. iii. 3;) hence, (Jer. xxxii. 40,) "I will not turn away from them." *Ans.* True, if they do not from the Lord. No, but "they shall not turn away from me." *Object.* But we see many do fall. *Ans.* But if he doth, he shall not be broken, but taken up again. Ps. xxxvii. 24. Yea, for a time the Lord may do thus. But will this continue, having sinned against such mercy, and my sin being now greater? Now, the Lord will depart. *Ans.* (1 Cor. i. 8,) "Yea, he will confirm you to the end." Yes, it may be he will, as he hath done, while I am out of temptation; but I may meet with it before I die.

Ans. (1 Cor. x. 13,) "He will not suffer you to be tempted above measure," etc. Yea, if I was such a one as Abraham or David, that had such hearts, and did the Lord so much honor.

Nay, but (Is. lv. 3,) "even the sure mercies of David." This is the faithfulness of God.

III. In regard of the constant abode of the Spirit of the Lord in the hearts of the saints, whereby they are kept; (John x. 28,) "None can pluck his sheep out of the Father's hand." Look, as the first Adam sinning conveys the power of sin, and Satan, and death, which reigns with unconquerable power over all the sons of men, so Christ rising conveys that grace and constant presence of the Spirit which reigns to eternal life, and carries the soul through all difficulties; (Deut. xxxiii. 27,) "The eternal God is thy refuge." Let what evils can come, there is a refuge; yea, so long as I can stand. But what if I fall? "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Let a saint fall never so low, yet God's everlasting arms are still lower; wherever he falls, he falls at last into the Lord's arms; for else it was impossible for any soul to continue; (Is. xlvi. 3, 4,) "From the womb to the hoary head I will carry you." Saints, when they are little, think they shall fall at last, and when strengthened, fear, if they live till old age, their hearts and spirits will die; yet they do not. But how comes this about? "I will carry you." And hence it is impossible they should ever die or perish, no more than the Lord Jesus. John xiv. 19. So that, if God's purpose is firm, his promise sure, his Spirit able, the Spirit of life and grace in the hearts of the faithful shall be kept even to eternity.

Section III.

Use. Let that opinion, that the graces of saints are fading and mortal, rot and die, and be had in everlasting detestation of them that know the Lord.

Object. But we see how many fall off and fall back, and I have found it by experience so.

Ans. The seed that is cast into the earth, first dies, and then lives and grows; so no sooner doth the Lord fill his saints, but there is much self-confidence in it, and resting in it; hence it dies, yet it lives and grows again. And hence the Lord keeps his people poor, and sensible of their own weakness as long as they live; but if it quite dies and withers, they were never the Lord's, nor never had one drachm of grace. 1 John ii. 19. If it be taken away, he did but seem to have it. All fleshly excellencies in men, as common gifts be, do wither; (Is. xl. 6, 7,) "All flesh is grass." But plants in God's orchard never lose their greenness, though plants and flowers in the field may; (Ps. i. 3,) "Whose leaf shall not wither."

Object. But this may make men secure, say the Arminians.

Ans. 1. Nothing puts more life in the saints. It would sink them else, if it were not thus, as when the Lord told Joshua, "Wherever thou settest thy foot, thou shalt prosper, not a man able to stand against thee;" this puts life into him.

2. Though they can not fall quite away, yet they may fall so as to lose the sweetness of grace, and presence of God. If a man should eat too much, and ever be sick, though not die after it; or if one should fall and break his bones, though he doth not lose his life; is this any hap for any to rejoice?

3. Though they can not wholly drive away nor beat out the breath of the Spirit, yet they may "grieve the Spirit by which they are sealed." Eph. iv. 30. Which is more sad to a holy heart than all evils in the world beside. But, therefore, let this conceit die and perish, which is raised up by Satan to disgrace the image of God and Spirit of grace in the hearts of the faithful; for who will make men seek after perishing things, under a color of making men seek for the Spirit? It is to resist and quench the Spirit of God in them.

Section IV.

Use 2. It may comfort the hearts of the faithful exceedingly against fears of apostasy, when they see great cedars fall: How shall I stand? And when they hear of some temptation that may be hereafter, then they fear. And when they feel the evil of their own hearts, (which the Lord lets them feel to humble them that they may grow lower, and so stand the faster,) they say, I shall fall, and when they have found the Lord's presence, O, if now I should relapse after this health!

Quest. How shall I know whether I shall stand or no?

Ans. It is not discernible by perseverance, but by somewhat begun, though very difficult to be seen. As, —

1. Observe God's several and various dispensations of himself and his grace toward thee, whether they issue from his everlasting love or no; for if so, then he will everlastingly keep that which he hath given thee.

Quest. How shall I know that?

Ans. Look as that issues from eternal wrath, that separates the soul from God, or therein it is expressed, so that is the expression of eternal love which draws thee to God in Jesus Christ. Observe, therefore, the Lord's carriage, doth it draw thee at last to him, nearer to him; and so the more he dispenseth of himself, the nearer thou art brought to him; here is

the expression of eternal love, and the Lord will keep thee; (John vi. 37,) "All that are given me shall come to me." Let the Lord give his Spirit, though but little, they grow thankful. O, he is come, who, I thought, would never have returned again. Let him deny it, this keeps them humble. Let the Lord dispense himself in an ordinance, they love him; and "one day here better than a thousand elsewhere." Let him not do so, they feel the more need of him. Let the Lord free them from temptations, and give them conquest, faith now rejoiceth. Let them fall into many temptations, their faith grows the more purified than ever. Let the Lord give them outward blessings, they grow more vile in their own eyes, "less than the least," with Jacob. Let the Lord deny them, (Hab. iii. 18,) they rejoice in the Lord. They get good and are more endeared to the Lord, by every carriage of the Lord's; at least in the issue it is so. As it is with wicked men, they may for a fit be affected and return to the Lord, but in the issue they forget the Lord, so it is here contrariwise. There is not any unregenerate man, but something or other consumes him. The wicked ever are like chaff driven from God. Gold that is of an everlasting nature, keep it, beat it, burn it, you can not consume, but only purify it; it is not so with chaff. Let the Lord give him tastes of grace and joy, it estrangeth his soul from Christ, it doth not bring him near to Christ.

2. Observe whether thou dost grow out of, and live upon, an everlasting covenant or no; (Rom. xi. 1,) "God hath not cast off his people, whom he foreknew." Who are those? "Children of the promise," (Rom. ix. 7, 8,) that are born and bred of the promise, or whole covenant of grace. God hath treasured up all grace in Christ, laid it up in that storehouse; Christ hath dropped it in his promises. Now, when the soul is rooted in the covenant, now it shall never die nor perish. As it is with some trees, set them in the ground, they will grow, if they have sun and rain, but die at last: take another, and set it in a stock, so that it abides there, and fetcheth all its life from thence by cleaving to it; now it will grow and become a flourishing branch. Now, when the soul grows out of the covenant, for the whole benefit of it, and is fully satisfied with it. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 5. As take a soul that feels a want of all the benefits of the covenant, pardon, peace, life, that the spirit is ready oft to fail, and hath no assurance it shall have any part of that which is the children's portion; and looks upon his own unworthiness, never to have any from the Lord, yet it looks up to the free mercy and grace that made it to some, to make it good to me, and so

pleads the promise, and so lays itself there, and there rests, and there looks, and here sucks, and takes root, and the root spreads to every part of the covenant. The Lord hath now rooted the soul in this covenant, and it hath received life from hence; this is everlasting, you shall continue. And when the soul especially is like a bough blown by the wind, yet it stands fast still. If men have been in horrors, and then fell to reformation, and there rested, it will not last. If men have had some workings and actings of the Spirit upon them, and then say, God must do all, but they grow not into the covenant, they will die; but here, though God keeps thee short and naked, and thou only pleadest the covenant, thou shalt stand. If you plead for pardon, and some good, not the whole good of the covenant, you shall die also. If you grow upon some distemper, and the whole heart grow not upon thi , you will die also. Look as it is with a man that builds, he wi l make an end if the foundation be laid, but if not, pull it down, so here.

3. If the power of grace received and acted by the Spirit hath risen to the nature of fruits, and not leaves only. John xv. 2. And that is, when the soul receives that grace, as that in every thing its scope is to live to God, to give his heart content. For fruit is the end of the tree's growth, and leaves and fruit are not for the tree, but for the content of the owner of it. If so, the Lord hath undertaken to purge thee, though there be much self-seeking in thee, and he hath undertaken, though little at present, to make thee bear more fruit. Many a man hath much affection and grace, but when he hath it, what is it but leaves to adorn and beautify himself? But he lives not to the Lord: another man will live to the Lord in what he does; the Lord is so dear, and himself so vile, as that he doth thus.

4. If you pray for it in Christ's name. *Object.* Many pray. *Ans.* But when Christ and you pray together, you will speed; and then Christ prays when his Spirit cries at the throne of mercy, then himself is at the throne of justice. And his Spirit cries, 1. Not for an unfit person, that hath some slight change, but for his saints, whose hearts are endeared to him and his whole will. 2. Not for an evil or private end, but the Lord's. 3. Not coldly, but with groans unutterable. Is it thus with thee? O, then how canst thou fall? Dost thou fear Satan? (Matt. xvi. 18,) he shall not prevail against thee, but thou shalt give the last blow and wound. Dost thou fear the world, the deceits of it? (Matt. xxiv. 24,) "if possible the elect." Dost thou fear the evil or good things of it? (John xvii. 13,) "Though in the world, yet Christ prays you may be delivered from the evil of

it." Dost thou fear thy sin, that will separate? *Ans.* (Rom. vi. 2,) "How can we that are dead live any longer therein?" It is a strong, but a wounded, but a dying enemy. Dost thou fear the Lord, thou hast walked so unworthy of him? "He will not break the bruised reed till judgment come to victory," though little, though weak. O, therefore, be comforted against this in these times, which are apostatical, declining, evil days, and bless the Lord.

Section V.

Use 3. Hence we learn what verdict to pass and give in concerning those men that decay and fall off from the Lord. They never had oil in their vessel, never had a drachm of grace in their heart. Thus, (1 John ii. 19,) "If they had been of us, they would doubtless have continued with us." It seems they were such men which were so eminent and excellent, as that there were no brands nor marks upon them to give notice to the churches that they were marked out for apostasy, but were only discovered to be unsound by their apostasy; and this was argument good enough. Hence Christ, when some of the Jews began to believe in him with a temporary faith, (John viii. 31,) "If my word continue in you, ye are my disciples;" as if he should say, Your faith is a fancy, if it continue not. Look, therefore, as the prophet said, (Zach. i. 5,) "Your prophets, where are they? Your fathers, where are they?" So say I to you; your tears, your tenderness, your groanings, your heart-breaking prayers, etc., where are they? Is it with them as with ships that are sunk and wrecked, some of the ribs remain, which gives you to see and say, there was a fair ship, but it is sunk? (1 Tim. i. 19,) "Make shipwreck of conscience," and so lose their faith also. Some men for a time seem to keep a whole conscience, wind and water tide; they can pass through many storms, yet at last it breaks, and when that is lost, their faith is lost also. Their faith before God, and conscience before men, both of them break.

Now, there are two sorts of apostates: 1. Open in men's life, whose falls are like the falls of a mighty tree; it falls with noise, and breaks down all the underwood; so their falls make a noise in all the country where they lived, and by their falls some are sadded, others offended and damned. 2. Secret, when men are apostates in heart, (Prov. xiv. 14,) which have chosen some sinful ways. Jer. iii. When it is with men as it was with Saul, there is no commendation of him but this, that he was higher by the head and shoulders than any of Israel. So it is with these;

in outward profession higher than others, but their oil is spent.

Object. But do not many of the saints fall openly and secretly?

Ans. True, they may and do fall exceeding greatly. But as Moses prophesying of the apostasy of Israel after his death, (Deut. xxxii. 29,) yet it is said, it is not "the corruption, nor spot of his children." Deut. xxxii. 5. There is a great difference between a hypocrite's apostasy from his grace, and saints' from theirs. It is one thing to fall from branch and root too, another thing only for the branches to be broken off and the root not pulled up. Jude 12. There are some apostasies that argue there was never a drachm of grace in that soul. Saints fall down, but do not fall away; and of such apostasies as argue want of grace, take the following discoveries: —

1. When a man's rising is the cause of his fall, (or seals a man up in his fall,) or at least the cause, through his corruption, *ex. gr.:* Time was a man lived a loose, careless, carnal life; by the ministry of some word, or reading of some book, or speaking with some friend, he comes to be convinced of his misery and woful condition, and sees no good nor grace in himself, he hath been even hitherto deceived; at last he comes to get some light, some taste, some sorrows, some heart to use the means, some comfort, and mercy, and hope of life; and when it is thus with him, now he falls, he grows full and falls, and this rising is the cause of his fall, his light is darkness and death to him, and grows to a form of knowledge; his rising makes him fall to formality, and then to profaneness, and so his tasting satisfies him, his sorrows empty his heart of sorrow for sin, and his sorrows for his falls harden his heart in his falls, and all the means of recovering him harden him; that now if men never had had means, even Sodom, they would have relented before now. This is a sad token of falling away, and having had only lighter work, it being a plain evidence that, at their best, they were filled with their lusts, because a little light and affection satisfied them, which is now turned by the power of their lust to harden them. Is. vi. 9. This is given as one sure sign of a people forsaken of God, when "in seeing they see not, and they hearing hear not." Look as it is in diseases, if the physic and meat turn to be poison, then there is no hope of recovery, a man is sick to death now. The saints' little measure makes them forget what is behind; (Prov. iv. 18,) He shines "brighter and brighter till perfect day." So let him fall, he can not be quiet there; but when he remembers from whom he is fallen, if once he tasted the Lord, this will fetch him again, and make

him restless till he return. But if it be so as now it is with these, then the case is woful, when there is such a plague on men and they know it not.

When a man saith to himself, as the glutton said to his soul, "Take thy rest, for thou hast goods laid up for many years;" so thou hast repentance, and grace, and peace enough for many years, and hence the soul takes its rest, grows sluggish and negligent; O, if you die in this case, this night thy soul shall be taken away to hell.

2. If when men fall from the Lord, and they rise up only in ordinances, but fall down constantly out of ordinances without feeling. A carnal heart falls, but he thinks himself is not, therefore, without all grace, because in an ordinance his heart sometimes is affected; so they were, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. The prophet's ministry was sweet to them, "but their hearts went after their covetousness," their hogs, their houses, their lusts, their lots; and they joy in the prophet, but never mourn for that. A precious heart also falls out of ordinances, but he feels his falls. Though he falls from the benefit of his rising, yet not from the feeling of his fall. But to another man, the sweet he finds in ordinances is but music to his meat; (Matt. vii. 26, 27,) "He that heareth my words and doth them not, that man's house is built upon sand, which falls," and the cause of great falls is this. Look as it is with corn ground, if rain falls upon that, though it be long before any ripe fruit comes, yet it makes it at last come to some ripeness. But if it falls on other ground, seed is sown there, but it brings forth briers; though it drinks in rain, it is nigh to cursing. Heb. vi. 7, 8. Look as it was with Saul, "God had forsaken him," (1 Sam. xvi. 14, 23,) and a spirit of Satan came upon him; yet when David played with his harp, it stilled the spirit in him, and affected him much; it did not cast out the spirit, for when he had done playing, the evil spirit came again upon him." So it is at this day: a man is forsaken of the Spirit of God, and haunted with an evil spirit of pride, world, passion, lust, libertinism; a man prays, hears, and is made much better; it is stilled, not cast out; for after this a man returns to his old spirit again, and in time he can not be quieted with preaching nor praying, no more than he could with harping.

3. When a man is so fallen as that he returns not in the season of rising. Look as it is with trees in the winter, their leaves, their blossoms, their fruit, their beauty is gone. Is it then dry and barren, and quite withered and cursed? One would think so for the present, but it is not so, because the season of fruit and leaves is not now; if in spring and summer it should

be so, then you might well suspect it. Thus, (Jer. viii. 5, 7, 8,) yet they said they were wise, and they had law and ordinances among them. True, yet they did not know their season, hence fell with an everlasting backsliding. Hence, (Psalm i. 3–5,) "They are like the tree planted by the river's side, which bears in season."

Quest. What and when is this season?

Ans. I can not tell you the season of every man, but I will show you the usual seasons of many men.

1. When Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, draws exceeding near unto the soul, and that to the reviving of others, (Is. lv. 6,) but thy heart never a whit the better, nor yet much troubled it is so bad. When Peter falls, a look recovers him; when Ephesus falls from her first love, to "remember from whence she is fallen" is enough to restore her to her love again. When the disciples fell after Christ's death, yet when he arose and opened the Scripture, their hearts burned within them. But thou hast had Jesus Christ opening the riches of his grace from heaven, and thou hast heard a voice, but not seen the sight, the glory of the Lord in this thy day; and this thou hast done though the sun hath come to his full height sometime. This is thy season; gospel, and Christ, and promises are grown common to you, etc. As it was with the possessed man, (Matt. xvii. 15,) "The devil takes him oft, and casts him into the water and fire;" but if, when he comes to Christ, he has no help, the Lord be merciful to him then. So you have been possessed and fallen, but when the Lord Jesus comes he casts them out; but if the Lord speaks, enlightens, and cometh, saying, Remember me whom thou hast abused, my wet look, my watery eyes, and my sorrowful heart which thou hast broken; here is all my love, and this prevails not, but thou neither risest nor desirest the Lord to raise thee. This is sad! In the day of jubilee, be a servant then forever, if your old master still pleaseth you; especially when all means are used; when the last of a course of physic is taken, and is ineffectual.

2. When the Lord is ready to depart from the soul. Sometimes saints do not melt at love; but the Lord departs, now this recovers them. As a man that hath a friend, though they grow weary of their company, and they begin to carry away divers things, yet when they come to take their leave indeed, now they recover, and they can not part now. Like Joseph and his brethren, they can neither of them part. Nicodemus and Joseph can not contain, but cleave to Christ, when most forsaken. David, when God "hides his face, is troubled." Ps. xxx. 7. It is with

saints as with sick folk; when their sickness and sores come to their height, now they break and recover. Hosea v. 15. But if God's departing from thee makes thee more vile, it makes thee apostatize from him; it is certain thou hadst never life then. This is a Saul's brand. 1 Sam. xxviii. He forsakes the Lord and goes to a witch. Never saw you yet a gracious heart, but the Lord made extremity fetch him in. And no surer sign of an ungracious heart, than to have this blast him and drive him from the Lord. Mal. iii. 14. A man hath God's ordinances, he finds no profit, no God, no Christ, his affection is lost, and now he forsakes the Lord. O, when Christ is a rock of offence, woe, woe to that soul. Now, thou hast neither summer nor winter fruit. O, look to thy fall here.

3. When men so fall from the Lord, as that their whole hearts make choice of, and are espoused to some lust, wedded to some distemper. For though the saints may fall, yet never to another lover; for they can not fall into any sin that breaks covenant between them and the Lord. Hosea ii. 19. When men make choice of any thing in the world to take content in more than in the Lord, or together with the Lord, and hence defend it as lawful, and are fully free in it, there was never grace there. For if any thing doth give the saints content, it is not their choice, but refusing; but you are wedded to your lust. David could say, "I have chosen thy testimonies; O, forsake me not utterly." Others choose somewhat else, not thee; (Ps. cxxv. 5,) "Those that walk in crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth." This is given as a black mark of men that are broken off from the Lord; (Rom. xi. 9,) "Let their table become a snare." When it may be no unlawful thing, but lawful is that which banes them. 2 Pet. ii. 22. Sheep may fall into the mire, but if they lie and wallow in it, it is a swine; and all their excellencies are but pearls in a swine's snout.

Quest. But when doth a man make choice of it?

Ans. 1. When a man's heart is set upon a lust, and God blesseth and prospers him in it. When God fills the "backslider in heart full of his own ways." His heart is worldly, and he thrives in it; his heart is ambitious, and he hath his honor. This the Lord gives not to his people, but some rod or other upon their backs; (Hosea iv. 17,) "Let him alone."

2. When a man lies long in his fall. Saints lie not long: I limit no time, but when day after day a man lives in it; (Rom. xi. 10,) "Let their backs be bowed down alway." O, when a man's heart and back is bowed down alway, saints are under Christ's care.

3. When the cause of a man's withering is a withering root. Trees in winter cast their leaves as withered trees, but others' root is hurt. If the branches do wither, yet if the root remain, it will recover again. So the saints cast their leaf, and their branches wither in desertions and temptations, but they preserve themselves at the root. But why do others wither? It is because their faith withers. Heb. x. 39, and iii. 12, 14. Many a man withers because of his faith. He feels many wants. Why lives he so? Why dies he in beggary? Why, see Micah iii. 11, When a man is twice dead and pulled up by the roots, "so that the root perisheth, for him is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." That the means and way of enriching saints is a way of beggary, to these it is very fatal. There is some false faith in saints, but it is not wholly such.

O, consider these things. No grace! what, no grace? I say then, no life, no God, no Spirit, no Christ, no glory. O, mourn here. See it now, that you may be humbled, and so saved. Else you will fall worse and worse still. Jer. iii. 5, 6.

Section VI.

Use 4. Hence see how far they fall short of saving grace, that serve the Lord by fits and starts, and whose hearts follow after the Lord, and make much of the Lord only in good moods. Dying pangs are not eternal graces; withering grace is flourishing and prosperous wickedness. If the spirit of grace in the saints be of an eternal, constant nature, that is not the spirit of grace which accompanies salvation which is alive to-day but dead to-morrow, which a man is quite full of to-day but quite empty of to-morrow. Hence the prophet cries out, (Hosea vi. 4, 5,) "O Ephraim, what shall I do?" What more means can I use for thy good? Why, do we not get good by means? Yes; but "thy goodness is like the morning dew," soon licked up by the sun; "and like a cloud which passeth away," which promiseth much, but is scattered again.

The Lord knows not what to do with such men; yet how many be of such, that, like Jonah's gourd, spring up for a time, and then die the next day, and they comfort themselves under the shadow thereof. That, take them in their mood, they are as good as you can wish, more than men; but out of it they are brute beasts, not men. Whatever is in a godly man, the likeness and similitude of it is for a time in a hypocrite. Would you have earnest prayer for a blessing? look upon Esau; he "seeks for it with tears," and mourns for it for a time. Would you have fol-

lowing the means, and that the most powerful and searching, and joy in it also? See John v. 35, "What went they out into the wilderness to see? a prophet," a burning and shining light, and rejoiced therein for a season. Would you have hazarding life for Paul and ministry of the gospel? Alexander did thus for a time. Would you have people enter into covenant with God? Look upon the Israelites; (Deut. xxix. with xxxi. 16,) "I know that after thy death this people will go a-whoring." Would you have thankfulness? Ps. cvi. 13, "They sang his praise, they soon forgot the Lord." And these affections are for a time stronger than the saints, like land floods; and because they be violent and strong, they last not long; but, however, it argues a wretched, false heart. Ps. lxxviii. 37, "Their hearts were not right," because "not steadfast in his covenant."

Object. But what man is there but changeth? What body so healthful, that is found always in the same temper? Do not the saints find their hearts soon cold, their joy soon quenched, their affections soon spent? This, therefore, will discourage them.

Ans. I answer, in two ways:—

First. They sometimes deny the constancy of grace, where constantly it is, (for the spirit of grace in us is like life, for it is eternal life; it is ever acting or remaining in the soul;) and this they do by reason of many mistakes. As,—

1. They think the grace of God in them perisheth, when the act ceaseth. Whereas a man may be weary of actions of life, where life remaineth, as in sick men. A man may have a rich treasure always with him, yet not always spend it. There is a gracious frame of heart which the Lord regards chiefly, which is before the act, and hence may be without it. The wheel doth not run that it may be round, but it is made round that it may run. Hence, when the act of running ceaseth, the frame, whereby it is fit to run again, remaineth, and this is "the seed of God." 1 John iii. 9.

2. Many think the act of grace ceaseth, when it doth not act always upon the same object; as some think, because they have not the sense of God's love always, all grace is lost, when it may be there is sense of corruption at that time; sometime God gives victory over temptation, it riseth again. Now the soul thinks the very act of grace ceaseth, when yet is now warring against the temptation; sometime the spirit of grace may lead a man to prayer and sadness, sometime to a man's calling and cheerfulness. The act of grace is small, its dominion large.

3. They think they are not constant, when they are not so at all times as they are at some times. As a man thinks he is

inconstant at prayer, because he is not all day upon his knees; not heavenly-minded, because he is not all day long minding heavenly things. Whereas the spirit should be ready so to do and be at all times, and in every worldly occasion to be sowing and reaping some spiritual good; yet it is not a seasonal way to be upon the mount. Sometimes Moses must not come down to the camp. God requires every fit season for his special worship, not every particle of time.

4. Many think the power of grace is ceased and taken away when some special enlargements are; as a Christian shall find at some times; having special work to do, special miseries to go through, he hath special enlargements of the spirit of joy, courage, boldness with God, love, and zeal. These lasting not, he thinks all is gone now. But look as it was with Jonathan. 1 Sam. xiv. 8. Then "he alone and his armor-bearer went against a host," yet (1 Sam. xvii. 11) against Goliah not a word. Paul to his death was a faithful and able minister of the gospel, though sometimes his mouth stopped, and his heart straitened. The ship may be going to the harbor, though sometime greater, sometime lesser winds.

Secondly. But yet I confess there is much changeableness in the saints, and unevenness in their course, and their spirits are apt to grow weary and faint, otherwise they had no need to be exhorted not to be weary, and when they are lifted up, they soon sink down. Heb. xii. 1. And hence question, Was there ever grace in this heart? But yet there is much difference between the inconstancy of the one and of the other, in three things:—

1. A hypocrite's affections, when they cease, they are raised again by some external principles and motives; but the faithful, when they have lost what they had, they recover it again by a new nature, an inward principle, which is an evidence there was the being of grace all this while. Empty a pond, it will never fill again till the clouds above it pour down rain. Empty a spring, though it sees no clouds in the heavens, yet it runs of itself, and will fill itself again. So when a hypocrite is left dry and empty, if some clouds of displeasure, fears of death and hell, come, he is filled; but a child of God, when no fear of death or hell, yet many times something within begins to work, as in David; (Ps. xxxix. 3,) "While musing, the fire kindled;" the sense of sin, to lie out from God, to quench his Spirit, the beauty of grace, the command of God, the honor of the Lord Jesus recovers him. Heb. viii. 10; Deut. v. 29. They spake as largely as any could desire; yet their hearts were naught, because this came from no inward principle, but only from external fear.

"When the priests' feet touch Jordan, the waters stood on heaps;" but "when they are passed through, they overflow all the banks" again, according to their nature. So when the word is preached powerfully, and the gospel with authority, and the priests' feet touch men's consciences, and they come to make way for the ark, for the Lord, men in fits fall down before the Lord against their natures; and for a Sabbath day men are as full of good purposes and hearts as may be, yet perish at last. John viii. 30, 31. "Many believed when they heard his word;" but then are you my "disciples if you continue." All hypocrites' pangs come from external principles; and hence take them away, their affections die. Sometimes the novelty of a thing affects a man; the sight of shore is beautiful; at last when manna proves daily bread, it is loathed. At first ministers' feet are beautiful; they would pull out their right eyes for Paul, yet afterward cast him off. A Pharaoh, in thunder and fear of death, cries, "Take away the plague." A man in affliction promiseth much; when it is past, his care to find out his sin, his seeking to be purged from his sin, ceaseth. Joash is good while Jehojada lives. A man is good in quickening company, but "when iniquity abounds, his love waxeth cold;" whereas, when these fail, a holy heart grows better. That which makes the one to fall makes the other to fear, and so to stand. A conceit carries a man on; but when his conceit is gone, he falls. Look as it is with dead men, they may have heat and color, but it is from the fire; a living man may be cold, and his beauty gone, yet he comes to be hot again, not from external heat, but internal life within: he can get himself heat, as we say; so it is here. Or as it is with the clock and the sun, the one moves by art, the other by nature.

2. Suppose there be some inward spirit to raise affections, yet these graces arise in them without the destruction of the contrary corruption; and so are like to Moses' burning bush, "the bush burning, but yet not burnt." And thus it was with Balaam: "Suddenly the Spirit of God came upon him, and he saw the beauty of Jacob's tents, and blessed them" above all people in the world, yet his covetous, malicious heart against them was not consumed. We never read of Balaam's mourning for want of the sight of their glory, and of love to their persons and posterity; but the graces of the saints do arise from the dying of the contrary lust or corruption, yet the being of it remains in full power, though not in the exercise thereof, because it is in such a subject where corruption is dying, not living; falling, not reigning. Christ dies, and so lives in his people;

where Christ is indeed, there we are first buried with Christ before we are raised by him. Paul could do great things for Christ, yet sometimes is weak, because his strength arose from the sense of his own insufficiency to think a good thought. The saints see great things, but it is in such a way as that they "that see not might see." John ix. 39. Paul is sometimes set at liberty from pricking temptations, yet he hath them sometimes that he may feel them, and so be raised again. Hence many people suddenly find they love the people of God, and love the Lord, but never felt the contrary sin; suspect it is but a pang, as Capernaum was much affected, yet repented not.

3. The continuance of the risings of a saint are life to him; they are his life; his coolings, and declinings, and decayings, death. But *e contra* to a hypocrite, the continuance of his affections in ordinances are deaths and burdens to him, the loss of them his liberty and life, wherein he allows himself.

As, for example, take a hypocrite to prayer, he is affected for a time; but let him be long at it, he is like a fish in a fever fit out of the water. Mal. i. 13. So for sanctifying the Sabbath, and being very strict, but stay long here it is death, it is burdensome to him; and hence we shall see his decays are his life, and that which makes him walk loosely is, sometimes he repents and believes, and hath his canonical, set hours of prayer, and he thinks this is enough, and pleaseth himself with this, Who is constant? But now take a child of God, when his heart is enlarged for the Lord, that is heaven; it is his food, and now he is in health, as Paul said, (1 Thess. iii. 7, 8,) "Now we live, if you continue steadfast." So for others, so also with himself, (Prov. iv. 22;) and if it might be ever thus, then happy, and the thought of this sweetens heaven; but take away these, it is his death; and hence he groans to God for the removal of it. Ps. cxix. 4, 5. What good doth Christ, mercies, ordinances, heaven, do me with such a heart? Be not discouraged, you people of the Lord, nor encouraged, you that are good only in your moods, as the wind turns you; whatever love you have, it is whorish, and whorish tears, if you follow the Lord, and yet have your haunts; whatever service you do, it is odious to God, to work all day for another master, and twice a day come to the Lord for bread. Do you think the Lord likes this, to taste of his grace, and make a meal of your lusts?

SECTION VII.

Use 5. *Of Exhortation.* First, to them that are fallen to begin again, if God would but give you ears to hear, who (like

strange eggs) being put into the same nest where honest men have lived, there you have been hatched up, and when you were young, there you kept your nest, and lived by crying and opening your mouth wide after the Lord, and the food of his word. But now your wings are grown, you have got some affections, some knowledge, some hope of mercy, and are hardened thereby to fly from God. Can that man be good whom God's grace makes worse? and that flies from God's ordinances, and people, and private prayer? Consider what thou hast done.

1. You bring an ill report and name upon God; (Jer. ii. 5,) "What iniquity have you found in me?" If a country be well reported of, it is no matter if some others bring an ill name on it. Wise men will not believe them. But for the searchers of Canaan to bring an ill report of Canaan, this is sad.

2. Thou hast lost all thy prayers, all thy profession; nay, better never to have "known these ways," (2 Pet. ii. 21,) than to forsake the Lord.

3. No men's misery is so great; (Jude 13, 14,) "the blackness of darkness is for such." Search yourselves, you may secretly depart, when you are turning to the Lord, as a snail round about the wheel, the wheel moves it, but it moves a contrary motion of its own from the wheel. Therefore begin again. O, but will the Lord receive me? Who knows but he may? and "heal your backslidings." Hos. xiv. Because fallen, return: I know not how. *Ans.* Take words. But the Lord may not regard us. "You shall grow like the lily, and be as firm as Lebanon."

Exhortation 2. "Let them that stand take heed lest they fall," and you discover your hypocrisy to all the world, or be like the hypocrites, whose beauty soon fades. And here let me commend three things to you.

1. Take heed that there be not found in your hearts "a root of bitterness to grow up and choke you." Heb. xii. 15. If your house be left empty, and yet one living lust left in it, seven devils will enter again, "and your latter end will be worse than your beginning." You do not know what hearts you have. "Am I a dog," saith Hazael, ever to fall so? Let there be a lust after any creature, you will find the spirit of prayer die; then to think them too long in the word, then to forsake the assemblies of saints, then when your lust is met with to oppose men, ministers, etc. One reigning lust will bring all into captivity to itself; it will slay some, and make others serviceable to defend itself. Ps. cvi. 14, 15.

2. Take heed of taking on you the profession of a Christian course without finding the rest, peace, joy, sweetness of such a

course. Prov. ii. 10, 11. There is a satisfying pleasantness in promises, commands, ordinances, you will never hold out else; for wherever the heart finds rest, there it will abide, and for want of that it dies. As in creatures, if it had rest there, the soul would not be unquiet; if in God, it would never go to the creature. Some sweetness you may find, but look to find full rest; as men do find some sweetness in creatures, and so in ordinances; yet being used to them, they grow weary of them, because they find no God there, "no fullness of rest," (Heb. iv. 11, 12;) and go through all the world you shall never have it; get all the terrors of devils upon you, you will never stand by that; consider, therefore, as it is in sin, there is the act, and there is the pleasure, so in every ordinance and duty there is both. All apostasy is from this, ordinances are too burdensome unto men to be held unto.

3. Take heed you neglect not private prayer; build your houses fit for that purpose, though you sell some of your clothes; you will for your swine to lie in, and will you not to meet God in? One hour's meeting the Lord in private will quit your cost. And pray for this; do it lest you do it in the woods, and deserts, and dens of the earth. So much strangeness from God, so much apostasy; pray that you may hold out in this hour of temptation, that you may, with David, not "be forsaken, when gray-headed."

Thus you see now the particular difference between wise and foolish virgins, and what is the ground of the acceptance of the one, and not of the other. What then will be said? Can it be, That there are no graces in saints; or, That there is no difference between the one and the other?

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

OF CARNAL SECURITY IN VIRGIN CHURCHES.

MATT. XXV. 5. — Whilst the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

SECTION I.

IN this parable were noted two things: —

First. The church's preparation to meet Christ, from ver. 1 to 5.

Secondly. The bridegroom's coming out to meet them, from ver. 5 to 12.

In this second part, which now we are to open, three things are to be attended unto: —

1. The delay of Christ's coming, or the long-suffering of Christ before he come. Ver. 5.

2. The preparation he makes for his coming, a little before it, from ver. 6 to 10, by an awakening cry, which makes all the virgins look about them.

3. The coming itself; where those that were ready were with joy let in; and those that were unready were with shame shut out.

1. *The delay of Christ's coming.* Whence note first, What happened in the interim of his delay, and that is, carnal security, expressed and set out from the lowest and highest degree of it. 1. They "slumbered;" i. e., fell a nodding or winking, as the word most properly signifies. 2. They "slept;" i. e., now they were buried in their sleep, overcome by it.

Secondly. Upon whom these sleeps and slumbers fell; and that is, "They all slumbered and slept;" i. e., though for a time they were both awake, yet good and bad, wise and foolish, fell into this senseless and stupid, dull and dead, sluggish and sleepy condition.

Observ. I. That in the last days carnal security either is or will be the universal sin of virgin churches.

Observ. II. That carnal security falls by degrees upon the hearts of men.

Observ. III. That the spirit of sloth and security is the last sin that befalls the people of God.

Observ. IV. That Christ's tarrying from the churches is the general occasion of all security in the churches; or the not coming of the bridegroom when the saints expect him, is the general cause of that security which doth befall them.

Section II.

Observ. I. That in the last days carnal security either is or will be the universal sign of virgin churches. When the churches are purged from the gross pollutions of the world, and antichristian fornications and bondage, then either there is or will be general security. For these virgins, when they first made profession of their virginity by their burning lamps, were for a time all awakened, but at last they all slumbered and slept. This is the temper of the body of the churches.

Matt. xxiv. 38, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man."

Luke xviii. 8, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith in the earth?" i. e., an awakening faith.

Hence the Lord forewarns his people of this; (Deut. vi. 12,) "When thou comest to such a land, beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God."

Quest. But what is this their general security?

Ans. Look as it is in our ordinary sleep, so it is in this general security: there are these six things in it:—

1. A man forgets his business, his work he was about; so in a carnal security, men forget the Lord, his works, and his will; that which we most think of while we are awake, we least think of indeed when we are asleep. Take a man awakened indeed; O, then the worst remember the Lord and his covenant. Ps. lxxviii. 47. But when asleep, the Lord and his errand is least thought of, and hence security is expressed by "forgetting God." Ps. l. 21. And hence Jerusalem's security was in this, "they remembered not their latter end."

2. A man in sleep fears no evil until it be upon him, awakening of him; so this is another ingredient into carnal security, though sin lies upon them, they fear not till evil comes; as Joseph's brethren, though warning is given them, they fear not; like them in the days of Noah and Lot. And hence, (Job xxi. 9,) "Their houses are free from fear;" the misery for the same sin is lighted upon another; yet the secure soul fears not, as in Belshazzar. Dan. v. 22.

3. In sleep all the senses are bound up, the outward senses especially; the eye watcheth not, the ears hear not, the tongue tastes not, the body feels not; so this is an ingredient in carnal security, it binds up all the senses as it did the prophet Jonah's in the storm; when misery was upon him, he heard not, he saw not, felt not; so when misery, outward or spiritual, is upon a man, he that had quick senses before, his eye sees not, watcheth not; Christians neglect their watchfulness for their friends, the Lord and his Spirit, and coming; nor watch against their enemies that daily besiege them; the ear hears not the voice of the ministry, the voice of providences, the voice of the Spirit within; the soul smells not, tastes not the sweet of any promise, any ordinance, no, nor of the grace of the Lord himself; hence it commends them not; nay, the soul feels nothing, no evil, no good the Lord doth him; that look as the Lord there said, (Is. xxix. 9, 10,) "The Lord hath poured upon you a spirit of sleep, and hath closed your eyes;" so that the Lord closeth up all the senses, that a man is now stupid, when he is fallen asleep in security.

4. In sleep there is a cessation from speaking and motion: there a man keeps silence and lies still; so in carnal security, the spirit of prayer is silent. Is. lxiv. 7; Ps. xxxii. 1–3. David calls it a keeping of silence. "Up! why sleepest thou? Seek to thy God," say the mariners: indeed, men may talk in their sleep; so men may pray in their deep security, yet not thoroughly awakened: and there is a lying still, no progress; so in carnal security the soul stands at a stay, goes not backward, grows not worse, but goes not forward; such a one is compared to the door on the hinge.

5. In sleep, the senses being stupefied, and motion ceased, a man falls a dreaming; some dreams he forgets, some he remembers, and in his sleep fully and firmly believes them; so in carnal security, now a man's mind dreams of that which is not, and of that which never shall be; a man's mind is grown vain, and full of fancies and dreams; those things which never entered into God's thoughts, something a man dreams of the Lord that this is his will and mind, which is not; of the world, that is a goodly thing; of things to come which shall never be.

6. In deep sleep, though a man be awakened, yet he presently is overcome by his sleep; so that is another ingredient into spiritual slumber; sleepiness is predominant over his watchfulness; and thus it was with the disciples in the garden, they slept; the Lord came once and twice, and awakens them, yet they slept till temptation surprised them; scarce any Christian so secure

in the chambers of Christ, but he hath some knocks of conscience, some cries of the ministry, some woundings from the Lord, and they do awake him, but yet he falls to sleep again.

Section III.

We shall now show the reasons why virgin churches in the last days are or will be overcome by security.

Reason 1. Because that in virgin churches there are the strongest provocations to this sin, which are chiefly three.

1. Rest and places of peace, and freedom from hard bondage: Jacob may sleep with his stone under his head, but much more easily under his own vine and fig trees. A man may be secure in the times of trouble, but much more in times of peace, when we have our beds made soft for us, and easy pillows. Friends can boldly desire us to rest, where there is lodging for us: the world thrusts us out of lodging; while the prick is at the breast the nightingale awakes and sings, but when that is taken away it sleeps in the day. In times of persecution Paul is preaching till midnight, and the Lord is remembered in the songs, and sighs, and prayers of the night season; but in times of peace, peace, like Jael's milk and butter, stupefies all the senses, though destruction be near; hence, (Deut. vi. 12,) "Then forget not the Lord." Do you think that Noah in the ark, when the waters swelled above the mountains, was secure? No; but when the waters ceased, and he had his vineyard planted, now he sleeps in his drunkenness, because he knew not the strength of wine. In the virgin church, where this sleep is, we suppose this freedom from evil.

2. Because there men are most free from inward pain; for where there is much grief and pain, there is no rest, though all the house about be still; but when the house is still, and the body well, now it is hard but there may be rest; while the Christian doth live under antichristian pollution, his conscience hath no rest, and hence it is awake there. Here (saith the soul) I want the ordinances of God; O that I had them! Here I see sin and wickedness abounding, that my child is like to be poisoned therewith; here are such and such superstitions that my conscience can not bear: hence conscience is kept waking. But in virgin churches, where the house is swept of these, now conscience is quiet and at rest; now I have got a Levite into my house, God is now blessing me, etc. Now conscience hath laid down its burden, it falls down to sleep; now they cry, "The temple of the Lord," etc.

3. Because in such churches there is most aptitude in men to spiritual fullness, viz., plenty of the means; there is all the ordinances; in this mountain (Is. xxv. 1) God's feast is made, and fullness of spiritual gifts and graces, because they have now escaped the pollutions of the world, conquered the enmity of the world; now have come to a good measure of grace, and conquered the way of their enemies, got the better of them; hence, as the Israelites made peace with the Canaanites, not when they were too strong, but too weak for them, so now the soul comes to be at rest, to lay down its warfare, and to yield to a truce, to a league to his lusts and distempers for a time. When men are kept short of food, now they awake; so when the word of the Lord and his ordinances be rare and precious, and hard to find, now a Christian can trudge after them; but when men are full, now they desire rest; so it is here.

4. Because in virgin churches, there men are most apt to be overtaken with weariness; a man that never walked on in a holy way may at first setting out delight in Christ; but after he hath done walking in it, now he is apt to faint, especially if he sows much, and reaps for the present but little. And hence, (Gal. vi. 9,) "You shall reap in due season, if you faint not:" now, in virgin churches, these virgins are such persons as have begun to make a profession, and have made a fair progress; O how difficult now is it not to be weary! It is strange to see what short spirits after the Lord, what large after the creatures, we have.

Reason 2. Because they are the more easily overcome by this sin than by any other.

1. Because it is a sin which a man least foresees or fears: the apostle saith, "They that are drunk, and that sleep, sleep in the night;" and yet here men sleep in the open light: why so? Men see it not, men know it not; sleep steals upon a man: it is lawful to sleep; carnal security arises chiefly from the use of lawful things, on which a man's heart and thoughts are spent; they ate, drank, gave in marriage, they could see no hurt therein. When a man is had before councils, now a man fears to sin, he knows he shall be tempted unto sin; but when the Lord brings the shoulder from under such burdens, now to fear our tables, our beds, our wives, our children, our callings, our professions, and the snares of these, O, it is exceeding hard!

2. Because security is so sweet a sin; O, sleep is sweet; meat is sweet, but men may be soon full of that; but when sleep comes, many hours are little enough to entertain that; some sins are sweet for a time, as a short meal and away; but sloth is a

sweeter sin than any else besides. Let a Christian ask his heart, when he can take no content in pots, or loose company, or queans, and can find none in the Lord, yet this will give him ease, viz., his sloth; when he is weary of the world, and of walking with Christ also, yet sloth is his delight: and hence he cries, "A little more slumber and sleep, until destruction comes as an armed man." Prov. vi. 9, 10. When a man delights not in his wife, children, riches, honors, yet is he sometimes contentedly swallowed up with his sleep and rest.

3. Because Satan doth make his strongest forces ready alway to bring a man first unto this sin, because this makes way for the entrance of all sin and misery; no people so happy as the Israelites, while they were awakened and up with God; no misery could hurt them, (Jer. ii. 1–3;) but when they forgot him, all misery came in: "while the strong man keeps the palace, his goods be at peace;" it is his care to keep men secure and still.

Section IV.

Use 1. Let us therefore now examine whether this sin be not our sin in this country, if it be not begun among us: if we be not sleeping, yet are we not slumbering? if we are not virgin churches, why have we the name of it? if we be virgin churches, then make search if this be not our sin; we have all our beds and lodgings provided, the Lord hath made them easy to us; we never looked for such days in New England; the Lord hath freed us from the pain and anguish of our consciences; we have ordinances to the full, sermons too long, and lectures too many, and private meetings too frequent; a large profession many have made; but are you not yet weary? if weary, not sleepy, not slumbering? it may be on you before you are aware, and you not know it; and when so it is, it may be so sweet that you may be loth to see it, that so you may forsake it. Let me knock again: is it not so? Let me come to every man's bedside, and ask your consciences.

1. Have you not forgot your God, and forgot your work also? the business for which you made this great undertaking. Ps. cvi. 12. When they were saved from the sea, they soon forgat the Lord; hath not the Lord, by a stretched-out arm, brought thee and thine through seas and dangers, and delivered you wonderfully? are not all his kindnesses forgotten? all your promises forgotten? When the Lord had brought the Israelites out of their captivity, and some hopeful beginnings were, they came for the temple; the dust was precious, but God's house did lie waste.

Hag. i. 5, 6, "Consider your ways;" no man prospered scarce in his estate; God did blow upon their corn because they forgat their end. What was your end of coming hither? The ordinances of God, the presence of God; and O, one day there is better than a thousand elsewhere: hath it been so? No, but as it is ver. 9, "Every man turns to his own house:" every man for himself, to their own house, lot, accommodation, provision for children; and in the mean while the Lord's house lies waste, you build not up that; the souls of thy brethren in church fellowship, yea, of thy family, are not built up; the Lord's house is despised now, and it is like the schools of the prophets, and much more. O, thought we, if we had such privileges, how would we improve them! But when we have them, have we the same thoughts? Do we not forget them, like men that come to a place for gold, and find it not without digging, they fall to load their ship with wood or coal, that which it will bear?

2. Have we not shaken off all fear almost of sin and misery? "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; she fears and provides against a winter." Do not men think that we have fled too far for the cross to find us, or as if the temple of the Lord was such a den as no foxes or wolves could follow us into? especially when there are causes of fear, when war is proclaimed, and the causes known; and yet they are not feared: how many men have the handwriting of death in their consciences against them! This they confess is nought, they have lived careless, sluggish, and have had some sense of it, yet no awakening fear of the terror of the Lord: when a prince is nigh us, now to commit a little lewdness is great wickedness; where is the man that trembles at the nearness of God to us? when a breach is made, then fear enemies. Divisions and breaches go before falls of churches; where is that spirit of Jehosaphat that feared and proclaimed a fast? When God hath begun to smite, what cause is there to fear! we have been hurt, and yet not laid it to heart; the lion roars, shall not the people fear? I believe we should not have had those Pequot furies upon us, but God saw we began to sleep: where is the man that, with Paul, knows the terror of the Lord, and hence persuades men? When the enemy is ever about us, there is always cause of fear, and yet we fear but now and then.

3. Are not our senses bound up? Look upon men in their fields and conversings, buyings and sellings; where is the daily, weekly watchfulness over our thoughts and tongues? Look to men's closets; do men there call themselves to account? can they find leisure or need of it? are not men's eyes closed up, that the glory of God in the Scripture is a sealed thing? men have eyes,

but see not; are not men's ears sealed up? some sermons men can sleep them out; man's voice is heard, but not the voice of the Son of God: O, how many men are there that become quite sermon-proof nowadays! Are not men blockish, dull, senseless, heavy under all means? they taste not, smell not; whereas elsewhere, O, how lively and spiritual are they!

4. Is not the spirit of prayer, that lamp, going out in the church of God? The blessedness of all flourishing plantations in the world began by means of that, and shall not continue but as it continues; and if ever cause to seek for prosperity of plantations, these have need. If God should take away this generation of magistracy and ministry, what would this despised country do? and what would become of your children? Then no schools for them, when no gospel is left among them; then every man's sword shall be against his brother, and God spreading the place with darkness, which through his presence is made light: what little hope of a happy generation after us, when many among us scarce know how to teach their children manners? How apt are we, like to those Asian churches, to fall into those very sins which overwhelmed them, and ruined them! how many fall off, and in time break forth, that it would make men sick to hear of their pranks! what place more open to temptation of persecution and worldly delusions? Go up and down the plantations, where is the man that lays things to heart? who hath the condition of the country written upon his heart, and presenting it before the Lord, rather than his own good? O, men are silent because asleep! How do sins run through men as water through a mill, and men regard it not! What means, what deliverances have we had! but O, what little thankfulness! 2. Do we make progress? nay, is not our shadow gone back? "I sleep, but my heart waketh;" it should be so, but it is not so indeed.

5. Have we not fallen a-dreaming here? what meaneth else the delusion of men's brains? what a swarm of strange opinions, which (like flies) have gone to the sores of men's heads and hearts, and these are believed also; and more dreams men have that are never spoken; every man hath some drunken conceit that rocks him asleep: dreams are quite contrary to the truth. What meaneth these, if men are not sleeping? First, drunken dreams of the world. Secondly, golden dreams of grace; that these things advance grace which indeed destroy grace; that there is no grace in the saints, no grace in Christ, no human nature, no promise to evidence grace, no law to be a rule to them that have received grace: who would think that ever any should so fall by a simple woman? But if this be not general, yet look

how do men begin to dream concerning the world? Scarce a man but finds want, or is well; if he wants, O, then, if I had such a lot about me, such an estate, how well then were I! and *e contra*, they that have it, and now they take their rest. "Take heed" (saith the Lord) "your hearts be not overcome with cares;" so I say to you.

6. Doth not the Lord often awaken us, yet we fall to sleep again? the Lord awakened us by the Pequot hornet, yet what use is there made of it? doth not the Lord often meet us in an ordinance, but he is soon lost and gone again? / Is there a man that hath not had his cross since he came hither, as loss in cattle and estate, a dear husband, child, wife dead? a sore and sharp sickness, etc., he hath been exercised with, etc., but do you not sleep still? / If it be not thus, it will come; fear it for time to come; but if it be thus, then I say no more, but know it, you are in your enemy's hands; and in such an enemy's hand, that if you mourn not under it, will open the door either to the entrance of some cross sin and temptation, or for some heavy and sudden wrath. It is sufficient for me this day to show you where your hurt lieth.

Section V.

Use 2. Hence see the reason why men are worse in virgin churches than in polluted places, and why it is so generally; because here are more temptations to make them all slumber and sleep; here their beds are made soft, here the storms are past, here they are under the shadow, and out of the sun, and security opens the door for an enemy: no wonder if the city be taken, though never so strong, if it grow once secure; no wonder if the world be entered, and men are grown more worldly; and if Satan be entered, and men grow more passionate than before; no wonder a man's work be neglected, if he be asleep, ordinances more slighted than ever before: never shall you see security fall upon a man alone, but it brings its train with it; when the husbandmen sleep, tares will be sown, and when the disciples sleep, temptations will enter; this is that which the Lord testifies of his people. Jer. ii. 2–4. I remember what thou didst in times of straits, in a land not sown; every one that touched you did not offend; but in the seventh and eighth verses, when brought to a plentiful country, they did not so much as say, Where is the Lord that hath done this for us? But yet the Lord questions his people for this, "What iniquity have you found in me?" which question you can not answer without grief here, or confusion another day. You that are the Lord's often have heard

this complaint, (for this may be your condition as well as Noah and Lot's,) but now see the cause of it; how hard to awake one hour! how hard to walk with God one day! short awakenings you have, but long sleeps, (this may be your condition for a time,) but you can not continue so forever, if you are the Lord's. But if you do continue so, especially without bemoaning this unto the Lord, it is a question whether ever there was that oil in your vessel which others have, when not only a man's acts grow worse, but the very spirit of a man degenerates; when not only the leaves of the vine fall, but the vine itself grows degenerate, and hence continueth so; this is a fore evidence of a woful state; (Jer. ii. 20, 21,) "When the yoke was upon thy neck, thou saidst thou wouldst not transgress; but the Lord hath broken thy bands, and now thou art become a strange vine;" remember it will be a heavy indictment against thee to be good in Meshech, but base in Zion; to be then worst when the Lord is best.

Use 3. Hence see one reason why the Lord pursueth many a soul with inward terrors and outward sorrows. Those that are fast asleep, because soft speeches can not awaken them, hence we lay our hands upon them, and sometimes knock them, because this is the way to awaken them, and then they hear; so the word and Spirit speak to a man; but such soft, still winds rock them asleep, rather than awaken them; hence the Lord layeth his iron hands upon a man, and knocks by blows; and now, when affliction is upon you, now you can hear; when as the winds and water were ready to tear the ship in pieces, now they inquire, Why were they sent? "And the lot fell upon Jonah," who was then sleeping; it is easy to awaken out of natural sleep, but very hard out of spiritual security: all the terrors of God on Jonah within and without are little enough; but at last he could hear, and run on his errand. Ps. xxx. 6, 7. Why did God hide his face from David? "he said in prosperity he should not be moved:" this was the reason of it; the Lord sees you have need of it; seldom shall one see an awakening Christian without inward temptations and terrors, or outward sorrows; O, consider then if the Lord do meet with thee; consider thy own security thou hast been in, or art apt to fall into. This is the sin you must inquire after and find out; and do not account it hard, though long, though bitter; for never greater misery than for the Lord to say, Sleep on; it is one of the heaviest judgments for the Lord to let a man go on in a secure condition without blows; mark, therefore, unto the end of those blows, to be thoroughly awakened by them; for sometimes when

the Lord sends them, a man (if they be not very bitter, if he hath any rest) lays them not to heart; (Is. xlii. 25,) "Fire burn about him;" and in this country I know not what curse befalls men; peace makes men secure, and sorrow makes men discontented, and sunk, and discouraged, which may be for a fit in a saint; but to continue so, this is that Ahab: O, when as thou feelest the blow, look now that thou dost awaken, and be thankful for it, that you meet with that you did never reckon upon, viz., to be frighted out of security thereby.

Section VI.

Use 4. *Of Exhortation.* To watch over one another, by "exhorting one another while it is called to-day." Heb. iii. 13. Let both the watchmen and members of the churches do this; for this is one means appointed by the Lord to preserve the soul from sleeping; (1 Thess. v. 1, 5, 6,) "Exhorting one another;" as it is in cities, when the watch is apt to sleep, they have their companies that are passing up and down the walls the greater part of the night, and so they are kept walking; and we shall find that as it is in a town where men are all asleep, one bellman, one walking Christian will keep life, and spirit, and the power of godliness in many; and when he sleeps, all are fast. Nothing in the world brings security sooner upon men than sleepy company: officers of the churches watch not over members, nor they one over another, exhorting and crying one unto another to their work while it is called to-day: O, then, let every man get up, and fall to this work of mutual exhorting; go and visit one another, go and speak often to one another; and if thou be a child of the light, see that thou endure not thy fellow-servants to sleep in the open day in one duty or another. Know, if God stirs thee, thou wilt awaken others; (2 Cor. v. 10,) "We, knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuade men."

2. Consider, thy labor can not be in vain here; the best-mettled horse needs spurs; others are asleep.

You will say, If I knew such a sin I would speak, but I dare not.

Ans. It is the case of all the virgins, they have need of it; (Jude 23,) "Some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Matt. iii.

3. Consider this is one part of your warfare, to keep your watch, whereby you may be made conquerors; you complain you have many sins and temptations arising and prevailing; never do they usually prevail, but when you are secure: first the watch is

taken, and then the city is suddenly taken: now look as Paul, (2 Tim. iv. 6, 7,) "He hath finished his course, and fought his fight, and now expects the crown;" how can you end your days in peace, that can not in some measure find and feel this? The church is the city of the living God; this is taken, and every man in it, unless you be watchful and "exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day." And that I may not speak in the clouds, —

4. Their sin will be yours.

First. Labor to know the state of thy brethren whom thou art to exhort; what their sleepy neglects be, and sins are; it may be thou hast known one hath been very humble, tender, affected under ordinances, made many fair shows and promises of growing, and thriving, and sensibly complaining of his own vileness, and now he is in a silent sleep; dost thou know this, and wilt not speak a word to awaken him, for whom Christ shed his blood, who it may be will do thee as good a turn, and make many a prayer for thee? "Barnabas, when he saw the grace of God, exhorted them with full purpose of heart to cleave unto him;" much more should you when you see grace dying. 2 Thess. iii. 11. Paul heard that some were idle; them he exhorts to work: what good might one do?

Secondly. If you do not know, inquire, with a spirit of much love, how it is with them; as David of his brethren, when they were gone into the fields, (1 Sam. xvii. 16:) Do you not decline, do you not stand still? how have you found your heart since last sermon, Sabbath, fast, affliction? have you got any ground against that sin you complained of last year? etc. Suppose you can not do this to all, yet why not to some? Suppose you have no other place than when you meet them in the fields, do it there; (Jude 20,) "Build up yourselves," etc. Now, here a man must know the hight, how high they are built already; how can they lay their stones else? It is one of the heavy curses of God upon the idle shepherd, "He shall not visit the hidden, nor seek the young." Zach. xi. 16.

Thirdly. If thou knowest nothing from them, then relate thy own condition; this is a most lovely provocation and exhortation unto another frame; for one great cause that hardeneth men in their security is because they see no such living Christianity in the world; but when they do, "Now (Zach. viii.) many shall take hold of the skirt of a Jew, for they shall say God is with you." Agrippa was almost persuaded and awakened when he heard Paul relate his conversion; although there be many impostors in the world that do so, tell me, Are all things in peace

with you? The devil is in you, then. What, hast thou no temptations? Yet many. Dost thou not observe how they prevail? Yes. Dost thou never get strength against them? Yes. Hast thou no good days after them? Yes, much peace, and life, and presence of God. Hath the Lord given these talents to thee to be hid in a napkin, this treasure to keep and not to spend? Who knows but that the speaking of these may awaken others? These temptations and this condition is mine; these sins I find he makes a great matter of them — Lord, what will become of me, that am hardened under them? this peace they find, my soul is a stranger to it; conscience will work thus: women should speak thus to women, and men to men; others were provoked, by the example of the Corinthians, to help others; so there is a provoking power here.

Fourthly. If this prevail not, speak often to them of the sins of others; in condemning others you condemn them; and this will make them look about them; view the fields, and show them the tares that are grown up by security; and laying down these sins, you strike at the root of theirs: it may be, you can not tell certainly. Acts ii. 40. The Lord made this one means to awaken Belshazzar. Dan. v. 22. God turned thy father into a beast, etc., to live in the woods, yet thou humblest not thyself, etc. How many professors doth God deal so withal?

Fifthly. Enter into covenant and brotherly promise to exhort one another, as David and Jonathan; if any hurt be toward David, Jonathan will speak of it. 1 Sam. xx. Some may in church fellowship be more nearly knit than others, to call one another to account, to tell one another their fears, to know of one another their progress. Canst thou not give an account to man? how wilt thou give an account to God of it? I am persuaded many a man lies smothered to death by means of this. Canst thou not get to the light of a candle? O, then, how canst thou appear before the light of the sun?

Sixthly. Provoke one another to frequency in ordinances, (Heb. x. 23, 24,) and therein consider one another: dost thou see thy brother in doubts or complaints? call him to pray with thee; dost thou see things go ill in churches, and men bite the bit? call to fasting and prayer, three or four together; as Paul, when he saw the ship sinking, then he exhorted them. Acts xxvii. 22. Especially when you see danger near men's hearts, ready to be lost in the world. In these times suppose only two, or three, or four, should go and pray one half hour together, and tell one another their wants, now help here; in our times it hath been so, one living Christian helps others dying.

What, art thou alive to God and family, where thou canst do but little common good, and art dead to thy brother? it is made a sad sign of a man forsaken of God, if when he thinks he shall sleep his last, and be damned himself, yet he would have others damned also. Tell me, would you have all New England lie in security as well as yourselves? No! Do you not desire it when you use not the means that prevent it; and that is, mutual exhortation? O, therefore, do it; ministers may preach, and every man sleep still, unless some awake and rouse up the rest (as some when others are in bed and fast asleep) that lie a-dreaming: Some there be, that though doomsday were to-morrow, they would sleep. O, let me persuade some one or two to fall to his work, lest your security prove your undoing; speak oft one to another, forsake not your assembling, visit one another, pray one for another, warning one another, that you may awake with the Lord one hour.

Section VII.

Use 5. Let every man not only exhort his brother, but fear this himself: you have a race to run, many enemies to conquer; sleep not lest you fall short, sleep not lest you be taken captive: lest in exhorting others yourselves prove reprobates: I will not tell you what I fear, but (Luke xxi.) take heed lest your hearts be overcome; be not drunk with some delight, be not filled with vain cares; hence prevent it, as Noah "moved with fear made an ark."

First. Set a high price upon those awakenings and revivings of heart that God sometimes giveth you; I am sure you find these sometimes. A man that hath nothing to lose will sleep with his doors open in the night; when a man hath a treasure, he will be watchful to keep it; all security comes from an undervaluing of the Spirit of grace, and its presence among us; (Prov. iv. 13,) keep her, for it is thy life; and when it is lost, what are you but dead?

Secondly. Consider thy continual danger; if enemies be at the gates, all the town is watching; one would not think the depth of security that is in a careless heart. Ps. xxx. 6. "I said I should never be moved;" he had good days and a thankful heart; then God did hide his face. A man would think Samson should awake when the Philistines are upon him; but here devils be upon thee. 1 Pet. v. 10. If all be well now, yet remember evil days; would you know when? even when men say, Peace.

Thirdly. Know the work you have to do, and make it your main business: when men have weighty business of the world

in hand, they can not sleep in their beds; and as the wicked, (Prov. iv. 16,) "They sleep not without doing mischief;" and so it is their main work.

Fourthly. Call thyself to account daily; let not thy soul long go on without reflecting, What do I do? Harts and hawks kept from sleep lose their wildness, but they must be constantly tended and kept watching: so consider the account you must give to God. 2 Cor. v. 9, with 11. Hence (Hag. i. 5) sins were upon them, and they repented not; miseries, and those were not removed; because they considered not their ways, especially before the great tribunal of God. I am persuaded the reason why men walk in their sleep, and go dreaming up and down the world, is this: they consider not, nor reflecting upon themselves to any purpose; what do I? whither go I? no sermons awaken, you consider not of them.

CHAPTER II.

CARNAL SECURITY COMES BY DEGREES.

SECTION I.

THAT carnal security falls upon the hearts of all men by degrees; for all the virgins here first slumbered before they slept, they first fall a-winking and nodding (as the word signifies) short sleeps, and then startle, and awake again, before they fall asleep for a longer time: a Christian is a slumbering Christian before he is a sleeping Christian.

The truth of this may be seen, not only in these virgins, but also in other examples of security in the Scripture; as the old world. Gen. vi. 2, "They saw the daughters of men," they let their eyes wander, and their hearts lust.

2. Then "they took them wives" for to solace their hearts in, to please themselves only, and not the Lord; "they ate, drank, gave in marriage;" they came not to that hight of wickedness, to commit adultery, or to live in whoredom.

3. Then they became fleshly and sensual; spiritual things are out of taste and relish with them.

4. Noah preacheth, and they slight him; he condemns them, and they regard him not.

5. Then God sets a time; no stronger means to awaken than this, and yet they go on; and now they come to their hight.

Secondly, the Israelites. Deut. viii. 12. 1. "They ate and grew full;" here is the first spiritual fullness. 2. "Blessing

themselves," in their estates, herds, flocks. 3. "Then proud in heart." Ver. 14. 4. Then "they forgat the Lord," and all that ever he did for them. Ver. 14. 5. Then men ascribe all which they have to themselves and creatures, (ver. 17,) though only in their heart. 6. Then "cleave to other gods," (ver. 19,) and here lie so fast asleep, till "plagues come down upon them."

"Solomon saw the sluggard's garden overgrown;" now as it is in the fields, the weeds do not overgrow all the ground in one day, but they are a long time of growing, but by degrees they overgrow all; that when he awakes (all is overgrown) he knows not where to begin; so it is here.

"Be sober, be vigilant;" security is a kind of spiritual drunkenness; a man is not for that time his own man, not a sober man; now this is by frequent and often sipping; a man he is half gone first, and then he is wholly gone; he hath not presently drunk out all his senses, not dead drunk; so it is here.

Section II.

Reason 1. In regard of the quickness and power of the life of conscience; whether it be a natural conscience awakened, or a spiritual conscience awakened; it is with conscience as it is with a prisoner in a house; though all in the house sleep, yet he is bound, he can not, and hence he is speaking, and will awaken the house; so conscience hath known, these sins I have watched against, and been humbled for; these duties I have done; but now, now faith, conscience, you neglect them; now you are worse, now fallen: now a man startles, especially when one stands at the door, and calls to conscience, it will awaken; so when there is a word to call, conscience will be crying ever and anon within, especially when any hope or leisure to speak with any as they pass by; so it will take men sometimes in their fields, and talk with them, and chide them; security grows up easily, but the awakening light of conscience can not be soon done out in any man; hence sometimes a man sleeps, and then awakens again; hence, (Rom. ii. 15,) though they had many sins, yet it would accuse and excuse; as those that come out of their own country to dwell in another, or from a great estate in a mean condition, they can not easily forget their friends and relations, but in time it wears away; (Prov. xx. 27,) conscience is God's candle; it will shine, and is not easily put out.

Reason 2. Because the Lord doth never depart from men but by degrees, and hence security falls upon men by degrees: when God is near unto men, then usually they be awakened, as the

Israelites before the mount. Now the Lord, to show the riches of his patience and long suffering, he will not depart suddenly, and leave the soul in a dead and sluggish estate. And hence the cherubim's glory (Ezek. ix. 10, 11) departed by degrees. Is. xxix. 10, with 13. God doth not so deal, as presently to close their eyes quite up, but they are awakened to draw nigh to God with their lips, which is of God, and then the Lord closeth up their eyes; never can a man be cast into a deep sleep, till the Lord saith, Sleep on, or till God close his eyes: and that he doth not presently; as to the disciples he comes a second and third time.

Reason 3. Because this is the most ready way and method for sin and Satan to bring the soul into a deep sleep; nay, to make them give themselves to sleep, which is that he aims at: look as it is with those that sell things; their scope is not to put off their commodities, but to put them off so as they may have money or money's worth for them: so it is here; the scope of Satan is not only to bring men into security, to give them ease and peace, (Luke xi. 21,) but to have his money, that the soul may give itself to it: now, as it is in buying of fruits, sugars, wines, or strong waters, they will not buy all presently, nor buy before they see and taste; they know not whether it is good or not, or whether they shall need it at all or not: so here, to lie in such a secure condition as to neglect all means, to be hardened after all sins, this Satan will not offer, nor will men buy, or give themselves to this; they know not whether this be good or not, less will serve them; and hence taste first a little slumber and sleep, and so call for a little and a little more, until a man is a beggar, (Prov. vi. 10,) as at first in paradise; first look, then taste, then eat, so here.

Section III.

Do not think you are out of a state of carnal security, because you have many times some quickenings and revivings of heart, because they may be only awakenings between thy slumbers, which, like flashes, suddenly come and suddenly go again, which make thee startle and rub thy eyes, and stir up thyself, but down you fall again; wherever life is in a Christian, it is ever acting for spiritual ends; a man will awaken first with God in the morning, and go first to him in prayer, (extraordinary occasions not preventing,) and he will go from his prayer to his work, not as doing his own work, but as doing the Lord's work, hoeing, plowing, sowing for him, etc. Now, when the life of

Christ doth not act in men, and act men, it is either because there is no life at all, but only the awakening of conscience which soon dieth, or else that living Christian slumbereth at least then; slumber is upon thee, though sleep is not; make it out else any other way.

Object. If so, (you will say,) who is not then sleeping?

Ans. Take Lot whilst vexed with the Sodomites, he awakens; take Paul while tossed up and down in disgraces and reproaches, his inward man is renewed day by day, though the outward man die. The saints have some kind of sleeps when they are at their best; but these are sick sleeps; but thine are sweet sleeps to thee. I know Christ may say to his disciples, "Watch and pray; temptation may be near;" but their eyes may be heavy; their spirit may be willing, the flesh weak; and that it is infinite mercy the Lord will awaken them, a first and second time it may be, by Sabbath awakenings, etc. Many can not tell what to make of themselves, because of their drowsiness and gospel slumber: methinks this may break thy heart, can not you awaken one hour? know, therefore, your sin; it is a hard thing to be fully awakened, to have all heaviness to sleep taken away: the Lord hath taken you here alone to himself; you do by fits watch and pray, but it is only as men asleep, not awake. The Son of man is betrayed, Christ, and the gospel, and ordinances; and can you find in your heart now to sleep?

Use 2. O, therefore, shake off your slumbers and short sleeps, lest you fall to sleep; and for sleeping, be awakened by some dreadful blow; look upon those men. Is. xxix. 10. "God hath closed their eyes;" that is a fearful thing: look upon many professors; all their favor, and heart, and life is almost gone, and they know not that they are asleep, nor all means can not awaken them, or unseal their minds again. God knows how far you may fall, if you give way to a little; especially if God takes away his ministers from you, and that the elders, that have known the works of God, be gathered to their fathers; especially if you know it, and yet go on in your slumbers: if you will not awaken when God cries and calls, you shall slumber and sleep; like the smith's dog, the harder the master strikes, the faster the dog sleeps, being used to it. I knew a man of great estate, often quickened by the word; but he lost all heat and life again, and he prayed and desired the Lord to keep him, and yet decayed, but he could not tell the reason thereof; at last the word began to grow common, and he slept there also; conscience told him there was some evil toward him which he feared, yet still slept, and continued so; notwithstanding his fears would thus awaken

him often: at last an affliction came; he regarded not that, but was impatient and froward under it, till at last all was gone, and then he looked about him; when his house was burned, he was asleep; he prayed, but lost all by sleeping when he should have watched; so security grew upon him; and hence, no wonder though misery met him: O, take heed, therefore, of giving way, liberty, or toleration to a sleeping profession, and your slumbering religion: as men will not tolerate ceremonies, because they are the fruitful seed of the body of Popery, so here, etc.

Section IV.

Quest. What are the first degrees of this spiritual slumber?

Ans. 1. When men have lost the satisfying sense of the blessed face and love of God; when hypocrites have lost the imaginary sight of it, and saints the real enjoyment of it; (Ps. xvii. *ult.*,) "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thine image;" sleep first shows itself in closing up of a man's eyes that he seeth not any thing about him; hence something else contents, and must do it when you feed not daily upon the Lord's love; and when that, then vain cares and thoughts (Luke xxi. 34) overcome a man, and then groweth a very worldling, as if he had hope of no other portion; hence no mind after spiritual good things; hence he sleeps at sermons, hence he falls out into a passion, and discontent with his present condition, nay, with every other thing when any cross comes; because these things are sweet to you, and God is not, when discontented: the Lord keep my soul from entering into thy secrets; O, consider it if you have had the sense of the Lord's love in sacraments! and some new doubts arise, and you are not satisfied with it; now look to yourselves; it is impossible a Christian should do any work without rest. Now, as bodily feeding causeth rest, so doth spiritual feeding spiritual rest; feed and rest here, and it will make you fall to your work; feed not here, rest not here, and you will in something else; and carnal rest will bring carnal neglect.

2. When men have lost all fear of the wrath to come, and the terror of God another day; not always a fear that I shall bear, but a dreadful apprehension what it is. Many Christians lose the sense of God's love, yet the Lord keeps them in the sense of his anger, and so they are awake; but when both are gone, or this is gone, then there is, and can not but be, the first security. For as it is with children, when their eyes are open to see and consider the things of the world, now they are begun to be awakened; I never look upon a Christian fully awakened until now, that the

Lord lets him see the things of another world; and when this is lost, he begins to sleep. 2 Cor. v. 9, with 11; 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12. Some securelings thought all things were past. "No," saith he, "there is a time a-coming when all things shall be dissolved; what manner of persons then should we be!" Hence, this being lost, men fear not sin, men prize not mercy, men wonder not if ever they escape; hence men live and hang between doubt and fear, never make sure, because they know not what God's wrath is. Nay, lastly, hence nothing awakens them, that though they know their misery, yet they will go on, (the highest degree of spiritual security.) O, then, keep these thoughts awake! what it is to be forsaken of God! what it is to grapple with him!

3. When men have lost their foresight, and hence provide not against an evil day; when Christians keep their profession, and go on sweetly in their course, but to lay up for afterclaps, that they do not; when Christians like grasshoppers sing all the summer; but what have they to live upon in the winter time? The ant can learn them that. Prov. vi. 6, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, that provideth her meat in the summer:" the ant, by a secret instinct, (though simple and little,) considereth there will be a winter, and that summer is her gathering time; so a Christian, if awakened, (though simple and little,) will be taught to do something which may serve him, not only now, but hereafter also: when men, in times of peace and enjoyment of ordinances, never fear, much less provide for that time, that all these treasures shall be taken away and carried to the king of Babel, (Is. xxxix.,) when men in their lifetime think not of setting the house and heart in order before the evil day, when men are not that now which they would wish themselves to be another day, when men lay not up treasures of tears and prayers in heaven, nor are provident for eternity, nor think this will be my peace, nay, my glory another day, though I lose now; men will lay up treasures on earth, and provide for themselves and theirs; hence their hearts are lost here, and lay in nothing spiritual for the future; (Prov. x. 5,) he that gathereth in harvest doth right, (but a sluggard will not;) his heart and mind is taken up to provide this and that for future; and hence it is that the Christian is full of sorrow and tears in times of peace; but when the day of trouble comes, he can lift up his head, (now redemption draws nigh,) when another in times of trouble hath most terrors, because the one was not laying up against another day, as the other did.

4. When men go to pray without receiving any answer, now a man begins to slumber; (Prov. xiii. 4,) men that are fast asleep

speak not at all, but when awake a little they speak a little, and then sleep and then awake, and sleep again; so men pray and sleep again; it is a deep slumber, also, when men shall beg for bread and money, and then fall asleep constantly, and so lie down satisfied. O, take heed of this; hence comes,—

First. Snarling at God.

Secondly. Heartlessness to the duty.

Thirdly. For morality in it.

Fourthly. Profaneness of course at last.

5. When men do gain something from the Lord in the use of means, but now stand still, they go no farther; they lose not what they had, but they gain no more; they grow not; (Matt. xxv. 26,) "Thou evil and slothful servant," that hid his talent, and did not employ it; and here is usually the beginning of a man's fall, when (like one in a journey) he goes not forward or backward, but stands still, and so falls. Prov. xviii. 9.

6. When men do duties that are easy, but when any difficulty is in them, now they fall down asleep, (Prov. xx. 4, and 12, 27,) and hence beg the sweet and gain of Christianity; it is sown in difficult duties, when the soul denies itself most; but when men, not breaking through the difficulty, find not the sweet of it, Lord, what a tattered profession is there, that men come to be the shame of Christ, not his glory! It is easy to pray, and outwardly to fast, but yet to have a whole heart in the work is hard; it is easy to cleave to the Lord when quickened, but when God forsakes you, now more than ever to cleave to him is difficult.

7. When men fear not the danger of little sins; they are not asleep, yet so as not to fear great sins, but in a slumber; and hence however they fear not lesser sins, hence come to commit them, hence also to be hardened under them. Many complain of hard hearts; but consider, is not this the reason of it? you fear not sinful thoughts, nor carelessness in your Christian course; your slumber is not upon you, thy conscience startles at whoredom, but not at a wanton word; or playing upon the Sabbath, but unpreparedness for it, that is nothing; sin in a manner with thee; the reason is, because spiritual slumber is upon thee.

8. When men are deceived and deluded by appearances or colors, as the Israelites when the Gibeonites came to them; confident of themselves, but deceived as the men of Ai by stratagems, if ever your souls be hurt, it will be by appearances; if ever this country receive a blow, it will be by appearances; error will creep in by appearances; the most vile wickedness hath been found to be hatched under fairest colors: if ever any shall come under an appearance of piety, and promise of protection,

safety, liberty, only your government must be a little altered; slumber here, and you shall sleep in your enemy's arms; grace, and the love of Christ and the Spirit (the fairest colors under the sun) may be pretended; but if you shall receive under this appearance, that God witnesseth his love, first, by an absolute promise, where neither grace nor life is seen; take heed there; for under this appearance you may as well bring in immediate revelations, and from thence come to forsake the Scriptures; and then no wonder if men fall to deny all foundations in Christianity, and Scripture also: take heed of mere appearances of repentance in evil members, be not deceived there: never was the world more full of craft; be not laid asleep with appearances of truth: thus you see the point opened. Stop security when it is risen to your ankles, lest you be drowned in it, and perish in it afterward.

CHAPTER III.

SECURITY THE LAST SIN OF GOOD AND BAD.

SECTION I.

Obs. 3. That carnal security is sometimes the last sin which doth surprise and overcome the heart of good and bad, wise and foolish, in virgin churches.

That as it is said, "That the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," so this death, like sleeping, is one of the last enemies that surpriseth the souls of the wise, but Christ doth destroy it; and of the foolish, but it destroyeth them. Thus it was here with the virgins; what was their sin that were ready with their lamps burning, waiting for the bridegroom? you see the wise polluted with no sin, till they fell down by security, (the foolish were wanting to get oil in their vessels before,) but this they fell last into: what, into the open profaneness, or other foul corruptions? No, but "they all slumbered and slept," and we read of no sin till after the bridegroom came; many sins indeed there be, which like branches bud from the root, but this is the main: and therefore look upon the next parable, you shall see this again confirmed, to show the certainty of this point: the servant that hid his talent (ver. 26) is called "an evil servant;" why, what evil did he? he did not lavish it (as the prodigal) upon others, nor lose it, but he did not use it; sluggishness was his sin; hence, (saith Christ,) "Thou evil and slothful servant." And hence the thorny ground flourished, and grew, and suffered; all perse-

cutions could not consume them. What was their sin? Mark iv. 12, compared with Luke xxi. 34. It was the cares of the world; they began to dream, (strange fancies came before sleeping,) and the pillow of their security was some worldly content; and this is the reason why Christ and the apostles are also exceeding pressing to watchfulness, because this is the sin that saints are ready to fall into after they have seen Christ's love and care; and because this is the sin the wicked will fall into, and their last sin; it will be just preceding their last plague; and hence the apostle exhorts, "O, sleep not you," etc. 1 Thess. v. 1, 2, 5, 6.

Section II.

We must know that the Lord in subduing a sinner to the obedience of himself, it is with him as with an enemy in a city; there are many strongholds of sin, to which he retires and resists, (2 Cor. x. 4, 5,) and when one is down he flieth for shelter into another, and maintains that as long as he can; so it is with men: or as it is with divers fruits, they have their several seasons of growing, and then of withering; so it is here; according to several seasons of a man's life, so are his lusts growing and decaying; there are the first and the last ripe fruits.

First. Take a man that is born and bred up to some years; man is a sociable creature, and it is a misery to live and be alone; hence the first evil he usually chooseth is evil and loose company; his lusts are grown up to some years, and now he desireth a match for them, and first he chooseth a companion; and Satan hath a mighty hand in this; because as the Lord, when he first sends to do his work, he sends two by two to animate and strengthen one another in the work, so Satan doth first join hand in hand together, that men might corrupt one another, and harden one another in wickedness; this, I say, is the first usually; hence Eph. ii. 2, and Prov. ii. 12. Wisdom first keeps from the evil man; and this sin is for a time the dearest sin, for here he meets with some pastimes, mirth, and so much love from them, that he loves this last more than all the friends he hath, (though they dissuade him;) more than all the Sabbaths of God, and hence he profanes them; more than Christ himself, and hence, when he hath many times purposes of turning to God, his company withholds him.

Secondly. Continuing long in this sin, at last he comes to fall into the sin of lust, and from men he looks to women, and this is as dear to him as his right eye; it may be God keeps him from the act of whoredom, but wanton looks, lascivious thoughts, spec-

ulative uncleanness, self-pollution, (which he commits when the candles are out, and none but God sees,) and yet God spares him; and this follows him to the church, to the streets, whilst he was awake, nay, when asleep, and thinks it is no sin for a time, or if he doth, O, the horror that he hath sometimes for it! Scholars of Westminster have been detected from twelve to fourteen years of age to live in this sin. This is the second. Hence, (Prov. ii. 16,) first wisdom keeps from the evil man, next from evil women.

Thirdly. It may be a man marrieth; and then this is sin out of season; now, therefore, another comes in its place, and that is, immoderate love of, and dropsy desires after the world, and the wealth of it, for now charge is like to increase, and it is a shame to walk in rags; and hence now a man begins to look upon the estates of others, and to admire at them; and then he looks upon what he hath, and what labor, care, and providence, in a saving way, may bring him unto; and hence burieth himself alive in the earth, and feeds upon clods of earth and uncertain hopes. And this is the next sin which grows up, (though I know some men will not come to this;) but I speak of them that go on in the fairest way; hence, (Heb. xiii. 4, 5,) "Whoremongers God will judge;" then "let your conversation be without covetousness," that follows.

Fourthly. It may be at last God terrifies this man's conscience, and he begins to see, "What profiteth it me to win the whole world and to lose my own soul?" hence falls now to take up another profession, to hang out another flag, and to lead a new life; and now pride in spiritual excellencies is his sin; when glory in worldly wealth dies, pride in spiritual glory lives: there were divers of the heathen contemned the world, yet puffed up with pride in their morality; hence "choose no novice bishop, lest he be puffed up, and fall into the condemnation of the devil." Now lets of mind come in when he performs duties publicly, openly; and now he hungers after the honor of men, and sets himself to sale for it: O, saith Saul, "honor me!" when he had confessed his coveting of the cartel; but pride stuck in him still. And when he doth duties privately, he rests in them, and accounts highly of himself for them, though they neither bring him to Christ, but estrange him from Christ. Hence Christ chargeth, "When you do alms, do not only do it not to be seen of men, but let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth;" take no delight in this: this was Simon's sin, (Acts viii.;) he, seeing the gifts of the apostles, would give any money for them; these gifts are sweeter now than money; hence such fall to some foul opin-

ions and crotchets, they can interpret revelations, and ascend to the ministry, and be the forwardest in a town; but when to do public service, respect is gone, their love is gone.

Fifthly. When this is dying in the saints, and fallen down in hypocrites, now sloth is the last thing that takes hold upon them, and this is sweet; what is the honor of men? what is the base world? now sloth and sleep is sweet. Now a man first ceaseth acting, and this gives rest; and now being here, secondly, it is death to come out of this sluggish estate; when the hand of God is upon men, and the spurs be at their side and in their heart, it may, it will be otherwise; but else not; they will not awaken, sloth is so sweet to them, though sins be yet to be subdued; time is short; God's wrath is great; yet that, as it is said, "He that escapes the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay;" so it is here, he that escapes one sin another shall slay him; but at last sloth shall slay; hence let a man look, what joyeth my heart? God doth not; wealth doth not; sloth doth.

Section III.

Reason 1. Because it is the best and most fit season for this sin to arise, when all the rest are fallen indeed in saints, and seem to be fallen in hypocrites; as the temptation is, so men's sin is; when there is the fittest temptation without, it broaches corruption within, and it runs not out before; for it is here as in war: when the enemy (never seen before) is seen in the field, (very dangerous and very strong,) is it now a season to sleep? No, arm, arm now; but when he hath driven and routed an enemy, and is enriched with spoils, and laden with prey, now it is a season to rest. Hence the poet notes, "When all the world could not conquer them, their peace after conquest hath;" now they have themselves (an enemy within) to conquer: so here. Hence if they should have desired the Israelites to be at peace with the Canaanites, when they first came in and had the land; no, they will cut our throats in time; but when they had conquered them, now (Josh. xv. 63) it is said, they could not do it; had they not had God's promise for it? yes, and he could make it good, but they could not, because now they had no list to do it, they were slothful. Exod. xxiii. 29.

Reason 2. *Secondly.* Because it is the strongest sin; no bonds so strong as the bonds of death; it is a kind of spiritual death, (Eph. v. 14,) though in the saints it is not death eternal. Now it is with the Lord, he reserves the best mercy till the last; so Satan reserves the strongest temptation till the last, and in many men it is sloth. Now it receives a double strength, —

1. From the strength of natural corruption which will remain when other sins die, and in a great measure in the saints, when the power of sin is taken from the saints; for take the best man and this remains; it is the sickness of the soul which will cleave to it. Hence as it is with sick men, when no mind to meat, yet, O, a little rest! it is greatest pain to walk, and hence the greatest pleasure to lie still. Sickness binds a man to rest, makes him love his rest: so carnal corruption to carnal rest.

2. The strength of pleasure in some lawful thing; for sloth and sleep's best pillow is ever some delight in lawful things, that is the shadow: hence, when a man delights not in gross evils, yet in health, and peace, and freedom from dangers; and here he wallows, as Issachar.

Reason 3. *Thirdly.* Because not only so, but it is the least suspected sin. I have known them that have been gracious, and long it hath been before the Lord hath made them know that they have had this (much less loved this) sin.

For, 1. It is but a neglect or cessation from act; it is no sin that doth openly war against the soul, but lives within like a friend.

2. It is a neglect which the best have, an infirmity: "All slumbered and slept."

3. The main work is wrought; it is not therefore any dangerous infirmity, men think; and hence the apostle (Rom. xiii. 11) would have them "awake." Why? We shall be saved, might they say, and had peace long ago; but (saith he) "because your salvation is nearer."

4. Because he sees many difficulties before him to break through, which unless God gave him more strength, he doth not see that God calls him unto; and hence saith, "that there are lions in the way;" after a long time of profession, then God presents greatest difficulties; and hence now sloth reigns in a special manner.

Section IV.

Use 1. Hence see the reason why many Christians, at their first beginnings, grow, and thrive, and abound in the fruits of righteousness, but afterward so poor and ragged; O, the two or three first years, how frequently in prayer, meditation! O, what sorrow and peace! but, after this, now they can find little good they can get; little growth they make, unless it be downward; little life they have, and what ado to keep it, or to get a good spiritual meal's meat! This is the reason of it: when they first began, then the enemy was out, and they were up, and now

they conquered and had the spoils; but since, they have grown secure, and love to sleep. I say, love to sleep; and hence little to be seen about them but rags; hence, (Prov. vi. 11,) "lest thy poverty come as an armed man;" truly this is it, and hence no wonder you are ever so full of complaints in midst of means; where God gives you matter of fullness, joy, peace, everlasting glory, yet you find nothing; so that sometimes you think there is no grace, or are almost of the mind that there is no grace to be looked for in us; if not, yet finding so little, there is no evidence for it. O, your sloth! it is the cause; hence it is you marvel at the Lord he helps not. O, you do not awake, to awaken the arm of the Lord; you shall know, if you follow on to know the Lord; but that you do not; and hence the pricks and vexations you made your peace with, and are again vexed by them, this is the reason of it. O, therefore, go on in secret, and say, I complain of my sins; the ordinances and God that I seek, and have not, when my heart should be otherwise; but, O, it is not because I can not, but because I care not; it is not because of the strength of my enemy without, but because of my neglect of watch and diligence within. I know it was a sin for Pharaoh to charge Israel with idleness, because he commanded work without means; but is the Lord's work so? Look up to him for strength, he gives it them that have none; put forth that strength thou hast, he will accept thy will, but will never allow thee in thy sloth, but you shall to beggary at the last. Hence men "roast not what they take in hunting," (Prov. xii. 27,) after ordinances. O, there is world there; never shall you see a soul careful, but he finds every Sabbath something.

Use 2. Hence we may learn the reason why many Christians, when the Lord begins to work upon them, have many combats and sore conflicts with various temptations, and one corruption after another, and scarce any breathing time wherein they are freed from such; and then many strong cries, etc., but afterward they are freed from all, and even these also; and they find nothing either within or without that greatly troubles them; but they go on smoothly in a course of profession also, without very much ado with their own hearts; their consciences are at peace, their distempers are at peace, and lie not heavy upon them; and they think God is at peace with them. The reason is, because they are quiet, and let their sin and Satan alone, and fall asleep, and hence they [their sin and Satan] let them alone. A sluggard saith, "There is a lion in the way, and it is a hedge of thorns;" many difficulties God sets before him. Now, if a man meets with no lions, no thorns, pressed with no great difficulties

in his course, it is certain sloth has seized upon that soul, and he is carried away captive by it. Prov. xxii. 13. For—

Look upon men, why should they be quiet? Is it because sin and Satan are quite vanquished, that they have no agonies and wrestlings with them? the apostle denies that. Eph. vi. 12. Indeed, while he keeps the palace, then he is all peace, and it is a sign he is entered again if you have this peace: but else Paul himself, and all that are in the field, are opposed, and will have fiery darts; and hence the apostle exhorts to "put off the works of darkness, and put on the whole armor of light;" why not works of light? Because then a Christian will find many assaults. Rom. xiii. 12. Or is it because they are men of such a refined faith, and such pure metal, that there needs no knocking, nor melting, nor temptations? I confess the Lord doth not see at all times the like need, but gives his servants many sweet seasons; but yet (1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 8) "they were begotten to a lively hope, and they did rejoice greatly in that hope;" yet they had their seasons of trials, "manifold temptations," etc. It may be they thought, Did the Lord ever love us, when such desertions, such fierce oppositions? etc. I know the Lord may leave David thus, (Ps. xxx. 6,) but then God was angry, and he saw it before many days. No, no, there is both reason for it, and need of it: and why are you at peace now? It is because of your sloth; (Jer. xlviii. 11,) "Moab at rest;" and hence settled on her lees, that they neither feel nor know their sin, and their scent is in them, though none is smelt or runs out; hence never stirred by any word they hear, nor by any blow unless it be very heavy; they are now at peace with sin, death, and hell, and are at league with them. Is. xxviii. 15. And hence as it is, where there be two kingdoms met, what is the reason that there is no hurt that the one do to the other? The reason is, because there is a peace; why so? Because war was so troublesome, and rest was good: so it is here; why are men never troubled? But only because they are at peace with their sin; and why so? Because rest is good: O, they love to sleep; I shall never overcome it, or I have other work to follow, say men, and hence they spiritually war no more; and hence Satan and sin are at peace; this is the guile of men, they think the main is sure; they maintain a name to live before men, keep duties upon the wheels before God, and have comfort often; and though a world of vanity is in their hearts, yet it never oppresseth them, because they oppose not it, and so are quiet.

Section V.

Object. But is not Christ's yoke easy, and his burden light, full of sweetness, etc.?

Ans. There is a life of faith, and a life of sloth; a rest which faith gives, and Christ gives; and a rest which a man's own sloth and security gives; but there is a wide difference between them.

First. A believing heart cleaves to the Lord, and so finds rest in the Lord, and that with purpose and decree of heart, to cleave to him in one thing as well as in another; the heart is not at peace with Satan, and at war with God, but joined to the Lord, and stands armed with a strong resolution against every temptation; and hence peace with Christ is maintained, not with sloth: as Barnabas (Acts xi. 23) "exhorted with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord, when he saw the grace of God;" seeing you find such mercy from him, O, cleave unto him: but now a secure heart cleaves unto the Lord in some desires; and if he be resolved of any thing, it is only of that which he can do with ease, and will not be what he would be; he would be better, and know the Lord more, and this quiets him; but he will not be what he would be, because his compact and covenant of peace is made with another; he will be sluggish and secure, and not use the means; O, sleep is sweet. Prov. xii. 27. "The sluggard roasts not what he took in hunting;" he will not roast it, there is trouble there.

Secondly. A believing heart, or faith, finds and feels its rest by trouble: "Unto the righteous there ariseth light out of darkness." Ps. xxxvii. "After you have suffered, God settle you." 1 Pet. v. 10. "Not as the world gives peace, give I it unto you." John xiv. 27. For the life of a Christian is a life of faith, which is a life contrary to sense and reason! When the Lord kills, what doth he intend then to save me? and when he blinds me, doth he intend to teach me? yes, that he doth, and by their warfare they find peace. Hence Paul, at the end of his life, makes his triumph, "I have finished my course," (2 Tim. iv. 6–8;) this makes promises precious; when, though a man feels the strength of sin, yet sees the Lord will subdue it; when a man finds the guilt of sin, yet sees the Lord will pardon it for his own name's sake. It is a strange place; (2 Cor. i. 8, 9,) "We were oppressed without reason;" why? "that we might not trust in ourselves," (why, was there no way but this?) why, this is the life of faith, to find life in death, peace in sorrow. But a slothful heart finds not rest by denying itself, and walk

through trouble; but by pleasing itself, and easing itself of trouble, because it is at league with it. One that hath broken league finds peace by war, and then takes spoils; but another *e contra*, etc.

1. A man denies the power of godliness, that is a burden; his slothful heart will not bear that, that is too hot; for the world carries a condemned carriage of them; and hence he keeps a name to live, and thereby hath peace with the world.

2. He wrestles not against Satan and his lusts, pursuing them daily, carries not the sense and feeling of them; and hence being lukewarm, "he thinks he is rich, and wants nothing, when poor, and blind, and naked."

3. Hence, not wrestling against sin, he feels not sin, and so conscience is at peace with him; "sin is alive without the law."

4. Keeping a constant course of private duties, he thinks God is at peace also, and so his peace gives him rest, and sloth makes him make a league, because he loves rest; and hence we find a Christian, most oppressed in times of trouble, many times hath most peace, and *e contra*. Because as it was with Gideon, he had his peace by trouble, they had their peace by rest whose flesh he tore with thorns. Judg. viii. 7. O, therefore, fear and tremble at their condition.

Section VI.

Use 3. Hence see the reason why many a Christian, after he hath seen and felt the work of God's grace in his heart and soul, and hence hath been filled with joy and peace unspeakable, that yet after long profession loseth the sight of it, and knows not whether there be any drachm of grace in his heart or no; and consequently hath no assurance: but ask him, Have you not known it? Yes, but it is a question whether ever it was immortal seed or no, for then it would not die, as I see it hath; the reason of this is, a man falls to a secure condition, fast asleep, forgets God and himself; and hence, though there be grace, yet it is not exercised, (Matt. xxv. 26,) and hence not seen at all, (2 Pet. i. 1, 8, 9,) and one grace to another, and then an open entrance is made; this makes calling sure; if this they do not, they will not see afar off; why? because they forget the Lord, which is one part of security. Hence we shall find in times of persecution, never such assurance as then, (Zech. xiii. *ult.*,) because grace is never so exercised as then; and hence men much in prayer abound with much assurance, (when Christ was in his agony, he prays more fervently,) because then a man is watchful, and grace most exercised; when a man dies in prayer, and

grows secure, and hath little exercise of grace, now it is a question whether there is grace at all or no; and hence when men come to sacraments, how oft are they put to it whether the Lord be theirs or no! and hence when men come to the word, they lose all comfort, because they know not whether these promises are theirs or no, because they are asleep, and not waking with the Lord. O, therefore, lay no blame upon the Lord, but thyself; I have had grace, but I have not exercised it; I have lived a life of sloth and security; had I lived a life of thankfulness, prayer, watchfulness, and been ever awake, I should have seen my own heart, and what the Lord hath done for my soul. Here, here lies the security of a Christian, not in losing all grace he had, but in losing the exercise of it.

Section VII.

Quest. How shall I do this?

Ans. 1. Look that your eye be single, that the Lord be your last end, and that with an infinite love you cleave to that, and then the whole body will be full of light; but if your eye be double, etc. Matt. vi. 24. A ship that hath but one place to go to, will get thitherward in open sea with every wind. Who is so great as the Lord? who minds thee but the Lord? doth he provide, protect, and pity thee, when thou seekest thyself? will he not do it much more when thou art set for him?

2. Consider the sweetness of this life. In this life, (1 Cor. xv. *ult.*,) "be ever abounding;" why? O, you know "your labor shall not be in vain." And what will it be when you come to die? (Is. xxxviii. 1–3,) "Remember I have walked with thee." And, 2. After death, (Rev. xiv. 13,) it may be you account them nothing, but they shall follow thee; do you not find bitterness in the end of another life? you will find your pillow hard enough before you die; O, therefore, get something to make it easy.

3. Take heed of forgetfulness of the Lord, for this is the reason why many a man is not ever up in walking with the Lord, because he forgets the Lord; it is not because he will not, or because he can not, but he remembers not the Lord's love, the glory of his ways, "what an evil thing and bitter it is to depart from the Lord." Ps. xxii. 11. "They shall remember and turn." Jer. ii. 1, 6. The Lord complains of apostasy, "They said, Where is the Lord? I remember thee," etc. So I say to you, The Lord of glory remembers you; thou art written on the palms of his hand, and like show bread before the ark, so

thou dost ever stand before the Lord; hence every moment he is pardoning, purging, and preserving and devising how to do thee good; nay, he remembers thy love, prayers, seekings after him, nay, thy house and walls of it where thou dwellest: O, therefore, forget not the Lord, that so you may be ever seeking after and cleaving to the Lord.

Section VIII.

Use 4. Hence see the reason why men, after long profession, fall into many slothful opinions, because their hearts are surprised with this enemy of sloth first; and it is God's just judgment upon men, that, seeing they love their sleep and laziness, they shall be lazy by rule, and so be forever hardened in it.

Quest. What are those slothful opinions?

Ans. First. What is this but one to make the law no rule to a Christian's life? as though a Christian should be like a man at sea, and carried by the wind, but he must have no compass to sail by also. In these last times Christ's kingly office is chiefly opposed; men are glad of Christ's righteousness and death to save them; but when he comes to plant his laws, (as all conquerors do amongst men,) they do then shake them off, and under a color of love to their prince, make his laws no bonds to bind them; so these think this is the liberty of a Christian, the liberty of a prince to be lawless. 2 Pet. ii. 19.

Secondly. That there is no activity of grace received, no power to stir till stirred; and therefore leave all upon Christ, they can do nothing; if he gives nothing, they can not help it; if he doth, then all is well, etc. It is true, till the Lord doth help what can we do? But there is an immutable assistance of Spirit, whereby the Lord doth enable his to act more or less like himself when stirred up; and if you find none, because you fall short of Christ, do not think that the Lord will be a cover to such a cap, nor a pillow for a slothful heart; there is a sickness in the best, and must be followed, else we die.

Thirdly. That ministers must not exhort. Why? what can men do? If servants can not abide to be spoken unto when there is need, from what can it come but idleness? What can words make better? yes, the Lord's words have a power to help or ruin, when you shall say, O the exhortations, O the entreaties I have had, etc.; one main means of reconciliation is now abolished. 2 Cor. v. 20.

Fourthly. That Christians must gather no evidence from

sanctification; we shall find the root of it to be difficulty, which is never sloth's bedfellow.

1. It is difficult to be holy always, but there will be many weaknesses and sins, etc.

2. When we do so, it will be hard to discern what holiness it is, whether counterfeit or not.

3. When we do so, it is hard to keep it, but you will lose it again, and be put to further search, and so off and on: I believe Christians make them more difficult than indeed they are; but yet it is the Lord's way; Scripture is plain for it; and, if avoided because difficult, (which to many is sweet,) what is this but an invention of sloth?

Fifthly. That what a man can not do is always a weakness which the Lord will pardon. Sometimes it is; but not here; for a man's chief sin may be kept unsubdued from this ground, which sloth makes warrantable.

Sixthly. That if once the main be wrought, though he never grow better, yet he is to keep his peace and confidence. O, entreat the Lord to keep your heads sound, (though hearts be sluggish,) so as you may not love and defend your security, and then go and leave Christ.

Section IX.

Use 5. Let this be a warning to all that there is such an enemy to be slain; truly I thought if I could have got my heart broken, if I could seek the Lord till I had gotten a promise, then I should be well enough. O, no, there is a slothful heart yet continueth; and let it be encouragement to war against it. O, it is the last enemy, and then comes your crown, and then your warfare is ended; and there do as Samson, "Lord, help this one time, that I may be avenged for my two eyes," (Judg. xvi. 28;) so thou hast been made a slave to it in private duties, and God hath neglected thee; in public, at meetings, you have been forced to sleep, that an Indian, it may be, if he had stood by, would have jogged thee; therefore pray, O help, Lord, this one time (though I die) against this one enemy; thus Paul, 1 Cor. ix. *ult.* Is an immortal crown nothing? will it be no sorrow to you, when you awake, to lose eternal rest in God for a little rest in thy sloth? O, therefore, beat down thy body; it is the last, hence the worst enemy; say, (as Judg. ix. 54,) What, shall I fall by a woman? Shall I fall by the worst? Why did I oppose lust and pride? O, because vile; why, this is worse; it is the last, and hence Christ hates it most; and hath he given strength against any sin, and will he not against this? O, therefore, pray God that you fall not here.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST'S ABSENCE THE CAUSE OF SECURITY IN HIS CHURCHES.

SECTION I.

Observ. 4. That Christ's absence, or tarrying long from the churches, is an occasion (through man's corruption) of all security in the churches.

While Christ delays, the bride sleepeth; look as it was with the Israelites, when Moses went first from them up to the mount, they had no speech of making a calf; but when he staid long from them, now they make it, and make merry with it; so it is here. Exod. xxxii. 1. The holy apostle notes this to be in the last days; (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4,) "Men shall say, Where is the promise of his coming? all things remain as they were;" and hence scoffers (it may be with the tongue) at least in the heart, and so "walking after their own lusts;" hence (Matt. xxiv. 49) you see an evil servant smite his fellow-servants; (what is the reason of divisions between men?) one smites with the tongue, the other with the hand, and the other suffers; ("and to eat and drink with the drunken;") it is a sign of a secure man, when (though he falls not into a profane course, but) he can bear with it in others, to sit by and see others sin without check; what is the cause of this? "he saith (not with his tongue, but) in his heart, My Lord delays his coming." The very scope of the parable is to show the sin of men herein, and to prevent it by watchfulness.

SECTION II.

Quest. How and why doth this occasion and breed security?

Ans. 1. In that Christ's absence from the world makes him to be much forgotten in the world, (out of sight out of mind,) especially at those times when men are ready to be overcome by sloth; now forgetfulness of God is the beginning of all the deepest security that can fall upon men, (Deut. xxxii. 18–20;) whence the Lord saith, "I will hide my face from them, so as they shall not see me; but I will see them, and what their end shall be;" and hence this is made the beginning of returning to the Lord. Ps. xxii. 27, 28, "All nations shall remember and turn, for the kingdom is the Lord's."

Secondly. Because the absence of Christ keeps those things from being seen which should awaken, and which sensibly do awaken; that as it is within the night, when there is little

noise, and darkness overspreads all things, it is hard now to be kept from sleep, when the curtains are drawn; so while Christ is absent, it is a kind of night, (his coming is called "the day," and "the day of the Lord,") because the things of the Lord are hid from men; and those are these two chiefly.

1. The terror of the Lord and the wrath to come; why did men sleep all the sermon long (which lasted one hundred and twenty years) when Noah preached? Because they knew not of the flood; "so shall it be in the day of Christ's coming," men know not what wrath is: the thought of this keeps Paul's eye waking. 2 Cor. v. 9–12.

2. The exceeding riches and weight of glory that shall crown all the saints; hence all the faithful have been abundant both in doing and suffering for the Lord. 2 Cor. iv. "It is not worthy the glory which shall be revealed." Hence, (Heb. x. 34,) "They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," because they had "in heaven a more abiding substance;" they overlooked all things here when they saw that. When these two things are seen (which are the last things that shall continue) it would awaken; but painted fire and a painted kingdom never draw a man's heart much; so neither do these work upon securelings; or if they do see them, they soon are hid from them again, their light decaying, being not like the morning but declining sun; and though the saints do see them, yet they are very apt to lose (for a time) the sight of them, especially if the Lord tarrieth; and hence (Heb. x.) they had need of patience; but "when the day comes, who can sleep?"

Thirdly. In regard of his absence, do the things of the world present and keep their glory before the eyes of men; for what is the reason that worldly things (which men in their judgments say are vain) yet they are of such price with men? It is with them as it is with glowworms and stars that keep their shining, and are very glorious because the sun is set; so Christ is hid in his glory, and whilst men are led more by sense than by faith, men dote upon these things; they know nothing more vain, yet nothing more glorious. When Christ comes, a man shall see all the world, the honor, comforts, wealth, crowns, greatness of it buried before his eyes; and when an end of these things shall be seen, now the Lord will be precious; as doubtless when they saw the ark floating upon the water, happy are they that are there, might they say; and hence (Mal. iii. *ult.*) those that said, "The proud were happy," what was the reason of it but because of this, "The day of the Lord was not yet come to make up his jewels"? Now, when once the eye is

bewitched with the glory of the world, nothing causeth security sooner; as strange fancies in the head work a man fast asleep. Ps. lxxiii. When David beheld the prosperity of the wicked, he began to dislike all religion, and to account it simplicity to be holy, until at last he saw the end of these things.

Fourthly. Because in Christ's absence men feel not the evil of sin which doth befall them in their security, nor yet the evil of their own hearts; for if men should be presently punished, and smitten by some revenging invisible hand of God upon them after every sin, and as soon as first they begin to sleep, you should never see the heart secure; and hence the devils live in horrors daily, in apprehension of the judgment of the great day; thus it will be at Christ's coming, "then the secret things of darkness shall be brought to light;" but now is a time of forbearance; hence a carnal heart is set to do wickedly, and to go on securely. Eccles. viii. 11.

Fifthly. Because, while Christ is absent, conscience lies still most commonly, and seldom is thoroughly awake, and hence a man sleeps; for conscience is the Lord's witness, accuser, and notary; now the witness then speaks most fully and clearly when the judge is come. Now, however, God doth awaken some men's consciences thoroughly in this life, yet it is not universal, but in a few, to be thoroughly awakened, and hence men are very secure; (Is. xxxiii. 14,) "Who shall dwell with everlasting burning," etc.?

Section III.

Use 1. Hence we see the vileness of the hearts of men, that Christ's absence (which time is given to us to make us watch) should make us secure; that men should turn day into night, a day of forbearance into a night of forgetfulness; for if the Lord should not delay his coming, how many thousands would be swept away before any peace made with God, or before any work finished for God! Now he in pity gives such days, delays his coming for this end; and do we thus requite the Lord? 2 Pet. iii. 9. Christ himself doth his work while it is light; "The night cometh wherein no man can work." John xii. 35, 39. Now, what a crossing of the Lord is this! If he should come, thou shouldst be consumed by him; and if he doth not come, you will grow secure before him.

Use 2. Hence see the reason why the hearts of men are so secure in times of health and peace, but they cry out and look about them in times of sickness, and when the approach of death is near, because Christ now begins to come, and Christ's pres-

ence is near in great terror, and severity, and glory; now the soul begins to see Christ, and how he must shortly stand naked alone, stripped of all comforts and friends, before an all-seeing God; and now they look about for evidence; but before, the Lord would not come as yet, he delays his coming; I may live many years, and provide thus and thus for my children, etc. O, men complain of secure, careless hearts; and the cause is this, they see not this day a-coming.

Hence see one special way to prevent and remove security when it is fallen upon the hearts of any, and that is by daily setting before you the coming of the Lord; the apostles penned this, and saints believe this. 1 Thess. i. *ult.* I am persuaded some men have had in their dreams the visions of the Almighty, of which Job speaks, and have been awakened in terror and fear, even with the dream of it; but how would this awaken if seen and beheld whilst indeed you are awake? Many monkish spirits have been much awakened, in their superstitious way, by this; but the spirit of a Paul will be much more; for by this means he awakened all the world to look about them. 2 Cor. v. 11. And for himself, this did make him exercise himself; (Acts xxiv. 15, 16;) so it will be with you; you will not only be awake yourselves, but keep all awake about you; and this is not legal neither thus to do. It is certain, if you complain of security, I dare complain against you, that this is the cause; you look upon the coming of the Lord as a long time off, and see it not daily; it converted some in scoffing Athens to the faith; much more (if converted) doth it awaken. Let us, therefore, commend three things to you.

Section IV.

~~First.~~ Make the coming of the Lord real, see it real, and set it really (as it shall be) before your eyes; (Heb. ix. *ult.*) "To them that look for him," etc. Why do not men look for him? Truly, very few do look for him really; it is only a report, a noise with many men; where there is the power of grace, it presents things as they are, which shall be so; "Faith is the substance of things not seen," it puts them in their being; "it is the evidence of things not seen," for otherwise it will never work upon you. Especially think on these four things at that day: —

1. The consuming of all things here in the world, which your hearts are so ready to dote upon, and of all carnal and fleshly excellencies which you trust unto; (2 Pet. iii. 11,) "Seeing these

things shall be consumed, what manner of persons ought we to be?" If a man that is to make a sea voyage did know that whatever he brought to shore, besides gold and pearls, should be consumed as soon as he comes to shore, he would not freight his ship with those things: if men were assured, Here is a house where you and yours shall be burned, they would set it elsewhere; men come from one country to another, because sin will consume.

2. The amazing glory of Christ Jesus, (when Christ shall come as a deliverer to refresh thy sad heart and all his saints at that day:) look upon Christ as sitting on the clouds of fire, raising the dead; then them that are alive, changed in the twinkling of an eye, coming with all his angels, heaven left empty of them, and saints sitting at his right hand, shining like the sun, so that all the world shall stand amazed at them; and then, when judgment is done, up they go to heaven (the third heaven) with a shout, and so be ever with the Lord. And then, —

3. Consider the fierce wrath upon reprobates, who shall rise like toads coming out of their holes in winter time, standing before Christ's tribunal, crying out of the day that ever they were born, and receiving their final doom; imagine the silence while the Lord is pronouncing the sentence, and, when past, a cry; and then Christ to depart, and shut up himself in heaven with his saints, the reprobate never to see him nor his face any more: are these things tales, fables, notions? if they be, blot out the Scripture; but if real, O, then, who can but awake? If God intends mercy to you, the thoughts of these things will awake you, you shall see them really; if not, they shall awaken you by feeling of them.

4. Consider how many will be found too light at that day.

Secondly. Make this day present: optic glasses will take within them the present image of things afar off; a mud wall can not give the form of them; so, by faith, look at these things that be to come as near; for if we see really the Lord's coming, but we look upon it as a thing that is afar off, it will not affect: now a thing may be present to faith which is not to sense; it may be the last and great coming of the Lord is not very nigh, (although we are doubtless in the last times,) but the beginning of this, thy petty sessions before that general assize, may be nigh. O, therefore, make it present.

Quest. How shall we make it present?

Ans. 1. By pondering that speech of Christ spoken to that end, (Matt. xxiv. 44,) "In an hour ye think not of, he comes;" so either thy time is when thou thinkest it is nigh, and then you

attain the thing, or when far off; why, then is the time, and that he will not come presently is more than you can say; you see with wrong eyes, and wrong the Lord's patience.

2. By comparing the present time with eternity to come; for look as it is with base and little things, look upon them in themselves, they are not base, but compared with things excellent, as the prophet showeth, (Is. xl. 17;) so the time of this life, grant it be never so long, look upon itself, it is long, but compared with eternity it is exceeding short: set a prick alone, and you may perceive it, but when made at the beginning of a line it is scarcely perceptible. This time of life upon which we sit is but a point of eternity: O, eternity will amaze you, and make this time short, yea, nothing. Moses hence "forsook Pharaoh's honor," because "of the pleasures of sin for a season;" and Paul calls "afflictions short," when he saw "the eternal glory which should be revealed." O that you could think this time to be as the delivery of a child, by many pangs, into the world! so you, by many sorrows, are passing a short passage to eternity.

3. By making earthly things nothing, or not as great things. A man's friend is nigh to him, but there be trees and hills between them; and if these were down, or he could get above them, he would easily see and say, O, I see him coming; he is even at the door. James v. 8. So Christ is nigh unto us, and we to him; but the things of the world, mountains, and hills, and cattle, and ground, this and that stands between this and our sight, that we can not see the Lord. These things are so great, that the Lord is little, that, though near, we can not see him; now, when God cuts down these things at sickness, or when we can get above the world, now we can see them while we look at them as they are. 2 Cor. iv.; Prov. xviii. 1. "The rich man's wealth is a tower in his conceit," (all things are swayed by conceit;) pull down that, now you make all naked before you to see the Lord nigh.

Thirdly. Do thus daily, else you will grow secure by little and little. O that I could prevail with you to set before you once a day this time! how would it keep your hearts from dreaming and doting upon these things: 1. When any sorrow, that day will refresh; 2. When any duty done, that day will recompense; 3. When in want, yet full at that day; 4. When in misery now, blessed then. When a man is ready with light and lamp at all watches of the night, O, blessed then! you can hardly keep from security and carelessness by this, how will you then do without it? you will die in security.

Section V.

Use 4. Let this be a warning to all those who have passed the first age of their Christian life: after you have waited long and tarried for the bridegroom, take heed of security, and think this may occasion it, viz., the bridegroom's delay. In the first heat of your youthful affections, there is not that danger then as now, lest you grow decrepit, passive, and dull; and therefore think, Whatever else I do, I will be sure to keep this door; it shall not come in here; and yet do we not see men fall here? One would think it should not be so in these times, when God calls so many of his servants to heaven to him, and is hacking at so many posts and pillars of this tabernacle, especially considering, withal, that it is no time to seek great things to yourselves. "Thou shalt have thy life for a prey," as he said to Baruch. Who is it that thinks it long to death that is within a day's walk of his grave? O, if you have your life, you are well; you may be glad of a place to die in.

CHAPTER V.

OF CHRIST'S AWAKENING CRY BEFORE HIS COMING.

Verse 6–9. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh: go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

Section I.

In these words is set down the preparation made some time before the bridegroom's coming; and that is by a "cry" that "the bridegroom cometh;" and therefore the churches should meet him. This is amplified from two things chiefly: —

First. The time when this cry was made, and that was at "midnight."

Secondly. The effect that this cry took upon the virgins, from ver. 8 to 10.

What should be meant by this cry is disputed of by some. Some think by it is meant the descending of Christ from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel and trump of God, (1 Thess. iv. *ult.*,) which I do not wholly exclude because there shall be such a clamor before the Lord comes, as at the giving of the law; so at the time when the world shall be judged by

the law; so this circumstance is added (as Pareus and others interpret) in regard of the parable, which speaks of Christ's coming under the similitude of a wedding solemnized in the night-time, according to the custom of those times, who, when they come forth out of their several houses to meet one another, a cry and noise is made, "the bridegroom cometh." Now,—

Quest. What is meant by the coming of the Lord, the bridegroom?

Ans. The coming of Christ, principally here meant, is that coming of Christ either to general or particular judgment in the latter ages of the world. Then, for when (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2) they thought the coming of Christ was near, so saith he, not till antichrist is revealed and destroyed; therefore, when antichrist is discovered and destroyed, and churches upon this refined, now there remaining no more to be done in this world but Christ's coming, all promises being fulfilled except that, so that they live in expectation of that; Christ staying and not coming so soon, churches grow secure; yet before the Lord comes to either judgment he hath his cry; yet here is to be meant the coming of Christ at other times of the church when they shall be virgins; and hence a command to watch, that concerns and binds all to be ready against the coming of Christ, whether to general or particular judgment at death, or any other coming of the Lord in this life, either in special mercy to his people, or in terror to hypocrites. Luke xviii. Christ's coming to hear prayers, and to avenge himself of his church's enemies, is a coming. When the Jews shall be called, and antichrist destroyed, (2 Thess. ii.,) it is called Christ's coming. So the sum is this: look as before the bridegroom meets the bride, and cry is made to awaken them to come to meet him, so, before Christ comes to his secure churches to take his people to nearer fellowship with himself in this life, or at death, or at judgment, Christ hath his cry to awaken them.

Section II.

Observ. 1. That before Christ's coming to secure his churches, the Lord will send forth his cry to awaken these churches, to give warning of, and to make them ready for his coming; his coming either at the last day, or at death, or in this life, to take them into nearer fellowship with himself.

It is true, Christ's coming is at midnight, at a time when one would think he would not come; but yet at midnight there is this cry, which prepares and goes before his coming.

Quest. What is this cry?

Ans. It is not a still voice, but a loud cry, which hath its effect for which God sends it. Now, we shall find in Scripture there are two ways by which God doth usually awaken a secure sinner.

First. The cry of the word.

Secondly. The voice or cry of the rod. So this cry of Christ is,—

First. Sometimes the cry of the word; for thus John (Is. xl. 3) is called a crier, and Prov. i. 24; Zech. vii. 7, 13. And this is the first course God takes to awaken, by giving the first honor to the word; this is mercy to see if that will do it. Now, it is not every word that will or can awaken; for many times it makes men more secure, (as some can sleep best by the noise of many waters.) Is. vi. 9. When the Lord sent to fat them, he sent Isaiah to preach to them; however, in itself it is a cry of Christ; and seldom doth he come but he gives warning by his servants, the prophets; but when it doth awaken, there are these particulars in it that it may awaken.

1. It is a word of majesty and glory in respect of those that bring it, (Judg. ii. 1,) one that preached to them, (he was no angel from heaven, for it is not said he came from heaven, but from Gilgal to Bochim,) why is he called an angel? because of that majesty wherewith God clothed him, when he came to awake them; for they had made a league with the Canaanites, and they began to vex them, it seems, and he comes to inform them they should do so still; and God set on this with majesty upon their hearts, and hence they fell to weeping; and this is usual with the Lord, wherein he hath a time when he will awaken men to purpose, he puts a spirit of glory and majesty upon his servants more than usually, that the most secure shall see more than a man; they shall see the Spirit of glory sparkling, and shining through such lanterns; as when God intends to harden a man in security, or leave him for a time, then he shall despise the messengers of God, and see no more but men, and shall have strange opinions of them; and hence, (Rev. xi.,) when witnesses are raised up again to confound antichristian doctrines, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, that great fear and awe fell upon all that saw them; such light shall shine through these curtains, that men shall not sleep.

Secondly. It is a word of discovery, and that of some secret, hidden vein of sin, which men never knew before; for when a man is once grown secure, it is wonderful to see that torture that lies upon a man's spirit, a most palpable and plain sin, which may be smelled and felt, yet it is not felt by himself, like him

that sleeps when the ship is sinking, he knows it not; now when the Lord doth awaken, he doth it by such a discovery, and this makes them look about them, (Hag. i. 6–9, 12,) "because of my house, which is waste."

Thirdly. It is a word of terror, that burns as well as shines, that so they may indeed be awakened; for though "Stephen's face shines like an angel," and he singles them out, "O ye stiff-necked," yet the terror of God not falling upon them, they are secure still; but now the Lord makes his word full of terror, it awakens them. 1 Sam. xii. They would have a king; they were told of their sorrows; and hence, "they feared the Lord and Samuel;" and now were awakened to see that which they never saw; God helped forward the terror of expiating of some outward misery.

Fourthly. A word of power to awaken some or other among the churches, and this makes all the rest to look about them, as usually when the word comes with never such terror and majesty, we shall see men fall asleep again, without they see the effect of it in some, and one or two will awaken all the rest; like some that are asleep, when they see others up, What do I here? Is. xl. The Lord shows how he comforts his people; first it is by the crier; and then (ver. 9, 10) it is by Jerusalem: when Samaria generally received the word, then Simon also believed; when the Jew begins to look toward the Lord, ten men shall take hold of their skirts, and say, "The Lord is with you." Zech. viii. 23. Sometimes this is the cry before Christ's coming, and yet men may shake off their fears, despise the light: hence the Lord hath a second cry, and that is,

Section III.

Secondly. The cry of the rod; for there is a loud voice in every rod, which many times those that are most secure must and shall hear. Ps. ii. 5. "He shall speak to them in his wrath," Micah vi. 9. Now, what are these? (I speak not to secure persons alone; we know how the Lord doth exercise them, but how he speaks to secure churches;) sometimes he hath lesser blows; but he that is not awakened by the word and the cry of that is seldom awakened by the cry of smaller evils; he may be startled, but seeing his pill is still soft, he must bear it, and cannot amend it; he sleeps again. Now, the things whereby the Lord doth and will awaken are two: —

First. By bringing churches into great extremities and distress, that they know not what to do, scattering them one from

another in woods, where they know not what to do for bread. Judg. vi., the Midianites prevailed against them seven years, until they fled to dens like beasts hunted up and down; and at last they have no bread, but begged, and their cattle destroyed. Ver. 6. Now they cry unto the Lord because of the Midianites, and he sent a prophet to make them cry for their sin; for this is the nature of a secure heart, while it hath any thing to ease it, it will not be awakened thoroughly, if it be in a sleeping vein; and hence the Lord distresseth them; hence (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30) after antichristian tribulation shall there be worse? yes, after that "sun and moon shall be darkened," i. e., there shall be a confusion of all things, (for it is the language of the Eastern countries so to express it.) Dan. xii. 1, 2.

Secondly. By ruinating of churches, breaking the candlesticks, quenching the lights, delivering them to spoilers, until the land be almost left without inhabitants, some slain, some carried into captivity; and now conscience cries, word cries, and rod cries aloud to awaken them, (Is. vi. 9,) "Go and make this people's heart fat;" Lord, how long? "until their house be desolate;" and then you hear of the sparing of a little remnant whom the Lord awakens, (Amos vi.,) you see them secure, (ver. 7–9,) there are captivity and plagues to destroy families; will the Lord deal so with Jacob, the most excellent people under heaven? yea, saith the Lord, I abhor them; and when you see them on the banks of Babylon, then they remember Sion. Levit. xxvi. 39, 40.

Section IV.

Reason 1. Because it is so difficult to awaken one thoroughly; no bonds (next to death) so strong to keep men under a security; and hence (Eph. v. 14) sleeping and being among the dead are joined together; and hence the Lord will cry, and if the word can not, the cry of the rod must and shall.

Reason 2. In regard of the people of God, who are secure with them that are vile in secure churches; if the Lord had none among them, he would come without crying; but because they are there among them, the Lord will awaken; but if any do, it is chiefly for their sakes; for though the Lord do pardon and wash away his people's sins, yet they come not to the fruition of pardon without faith, and this faith is never severed from repentance; and hence the Lord will not come upon them unawares before he hath broken their hearts, (not from infirmities, for they will last to death, but) broken their hearts for and with their iniquity, their chief sin.

Reason 3. In regard of Christ himself, that so he may be received with esteem, and attended upon with all respect; for let the Lord show never so much kindness to a secure sinner, he is not esteemed, he is forgotten, buried like a dead carcass, (a dead Christ,) out of doors; as it is with men that sleep, let the king stand by them, provide never so much for them, they regard it not; so Deut. xxxii. 15. Therefore we shall find the Lord never comes to his people, but he comes then when he is esteemed; first the Lord works the esteem, and then comes. Matt. xxiii. *ult.* Christ departs till men say, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Section V.

Use 1. Hence we may see the dangerous condition of all those that fall into a secure condition, and so die.

1. That have been once very forward, affectionate, strict, tender, etc., but now their lamp is out.

2. That have kept themselves and their hearts from soil, their lamps bright; but now, though their hearts contract soil every day, they are settled upon the lees, and their scent is in them, and their lamp never dressed.

3. That did once delight in approaching nigh to Christ in his ordinances, in going forth in them to meet the bridegroom; but now they not only neglect this, but take delight therein, and rest upon their neglect; as a sleepy man takes his delight, not in his work, but in the neglect of it; and though their hearts tell them of this, yet they go on their way, and die so; what shall we think of them? I will not absolutely determine, but they give shrewd signs that they are fallen into a dead sleep: for the Lord will awaken his virgins before his coming; nay, he will awaken very many others for their sakes, rather than they shall be secure. Look as it was with Christ, the nearer he came to his end, the more enlarged, and heavenly, and spiritual; so it is with them that have the spirit of Christ. Who are the servants whom Christ shall bless at his coming? Luke xii. 37. "Blessed are those that shall be found watching." That look as there is no smaller evil, but usually before it comes the Lord and gives warning; so the greatest and last evil, death, that so they may prepare for that; as Paul, (2 Tim. iv. 5–7,) "The time of my departing is at hand." How could Paul tell that? The Lord gave him secret hints of it; he could smell that state before he saw it or touched it; he could observe by the course and concurrence of providences; now my course is finished, the corn

is gathered, all in Asia forsake me; so the Lord doth many times unto his people; however, he doth keep them watchful. O, consider it therefore, you that are secure, if the word now doth not awaken, yet when thy sick bed comes, and death appears, remember this truth; but remember it now, I carry the brand of a reprobate upon me.

Use 2. Hence see what little cause any man hath to take pleasure in his security; no pleasure in any sin, (especially to a holy heart,) as of the sin of security; for if a man takes pleasure in his cups, or in his coarse company, or in dancing, as Herod, or in gaming, etc., conscience will give him knocks to every bit he snatcheth here; there is honey, but then a sting in them also; but now, when a man's carriage is fair, outward duties performed, conscience is quiet; when a man hath been at work, he thinks in conscience he may sleep; for deepest, sweetest security comes after most work we have done; it is but a neglect, a slip, which I hope to recover out of one day; it is not an unlawful thing, but a lawful, that I quiet my heart upon: now I have good company, freedom from dangers, ordinances, curtains drawn about me, the best sleep with me; and what hurt is here? but see the little cause you have to sleep, especially in this country.

First. It will not be your rest always, for there must and will come a cry: Moses took but little delight in Pharaoh's pleasures; they were but for a season; and therefore, as the Lord there said, (Micah ii. 10,) "Depart, this is not your rest."

Secondly. If the word doth not awaken you out of it, your cold prayers, your heartless hearing, your careless walking with God, that your lamps be not burning, (burning love to the Lord and his people, shining holiness, so as others may walk after your light, and be glad to follow you,) that present pleasure you take is the rotten wood that breeds the worm of a gnawing conscience, when, in the time of your trouble, it shall say, What hath your idleness gained to you? and it is the forerunner of misery; that if lighter miseries will not do, the Lord will bring seven plagues more, and drive you into a wilderness, and there shall you be famished for want of bread; and if this will not do, God will send spoilers that shall sell you for slaves, and that shall carry you away captives; and then you shall remember Zion, and the days you slept over your time. Find any sin, but security in it will make a desolate country and families; if you sin and rest in it, (though not gross,) nay, do but decay in what once you had; many say it is more here than ever; I deny it utterly, unless it be to them that are secure; and if it be so, the

loss of your first love (a small thing, etc.) will hasten breaking. Let this truth, therefore, be a burning beacon to awaken you; for God will make this word good, and not let one tittle of it fall to the ground. Ezra x. 3, they that trembled put away their strange wives, and wept sore for it; so do you, you think you may have this and the Lord too; true, but the Lord will not long abide with you if secure.

Use 3. Hence see the reason why the word strikes deep, and is very smart sometimes upon the consciences of men, that a man speaks as if he were in their very bosom, that a man saith, God is here, that the Lord leaves thee with sad qualms upon thy conscience, and no peace from all, (it is often sanctified unless no grace,) nay, after all this affliction comes; if thou wert not secure, why would the Lord cry, make his word cry, and his rod cry? etc., and therefore be not weary of either, but bless the Lord for, and quietly bear both; unless I had those terrors within, and afflictions without, I had gone astray. Ps. xxxii. 4, 5. David was secure and kept silence, he confessed, and the Lord pardoned; for this shall every one that is godly seek; O, so do you! think, then, Am not I in the number? O, let me seek then and confess my sin!

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S COMING.

SECTION I.

THAT though the coming of Jesus Christ to his churches be late, yet it is certain.

For though it be midnight, yet he comes, we see; for this coming at midnight is not to be understood of the last day of judgment, which shall be at midnight, (as the rabbins and monks in their devotions conceive,) for Christ speaks here of his coming to particular judgment also, which is not always at midnight: the scope of the parable is to provoke to continual watchfulness; because though the Lord doth not come in the beginning of the night, (as was the custom of the Jewish marriages,) yet he will come late, even when you look not for him; even at midnight there is a cry. I confess the Lord speaks principally of his coming to judgment; yet it is true of any other coming of Christ to his people in this life; and because particular examples and instances are the roots of general truths, (as

circumcision a seal, so all sacraments are so; Christ is a Savior of his people; it is meant of great salvation at last, yet is true of all salvation beside,) therefore I shall speak of the coming of Jesus Christ to his churches and servants in the general; and so involve the whole coming of Christ, for the more use and comfort to us.

Now, we shall find that the Scripture speaks of a sixfold coming of Christ, that as all our deliverances are but shadows of our great and last deliverance, so Christ's coming is now but a shadow of his great and last coming.

First. Christ is said to come to his people, when he comes to hear their prayers. Luke xviii. 8. And the Lord argues strongly, will an unjust judge arise at night, to help a widow, a stranger, when she is importunate; and will not the Lord hear his elect and chosen? "yet when he comes, shall he find faith?" i. e., such prayers of faith as shall continue; O, no! but soon apt to be weary before the time comes.

Section II.

Object. But if they cease, how do they pray night and day?

Ans. 1. Because they do so for a time.

2. When they cease, then they are ringing in God's ears; so that let the prayers of the elect for any mercy be once offered and presented as incense before the Lord, the Lord will not be worse than an unjust judge, never to come to his people.

Secondly. Christ is said to come to fulfill his promises; for sometimes the Lord keeps his people exceeding short, and gives his people answers to their prayer in particular promises, (you find it so.) Ps. lxxxv. 8, 9. "I will hear what the Lord will say, for he will speak peace to his people," that so they may live by faith, and glory more in the Lord than in themselves; yet he will come, though it be very long. Heb. x. 36, 37. "Ye have need of patience, that ye may receive the promise; for yet a little while," etc. We think this long, yet it will be so.

Thirdly. Christ is said to come to his people when he speaks peace, and breaks the clouds of fears and troubles, and shines upon his people; for while the Lord is angry, and hides his face, that a man is beyond sight of the face and love of God, now God in Christ is said to be gone; so then, when he returns to speak peace, now he is said to come, as that martyr said, He is come. Zech. i. 16, 17. "I am returned to Jerusalem, with my mercies, and the Lord will yet comfort Zion;" for when the Lord forsakes his people for seventy years, and takes away all his

ordinances, the external visible signs of his presence, one would think he would never come; yet the Lord will come and comfort his people. Is. lxi. 2. God hath sent and anointed him, and the Spirit hath filled him, and he is as willing himself to comfort them that mourn, nay, when they have the spirit of heaviness; and when it is done, Christ is come; then that is a coming of Christ.

Fourthly. There is a coming of Christ when he comes in more full measure of his Spirit to his people, and that in his ordinances; for there is a state and time of Christianity, wherein a man is carnal and blind, and the image of Christ darkly stamped upon the soul, and is exceeding weak; now the Lord is said to come when he doth this; (Job xiv. 18,) "I will see you again," and "I will not leave you comfortless," orphans alone without any one to take care for you; now though it be long before the Lord do come here, yet come he will, when the soul thinks it impossible, and the thing incredible; "Behold thy God, thy King cometh." Is. xl. 9, with 23. "He shall come like the rain upon the fleece of wool."

Fifthly. Christ is said to come when he comes to destroy and root out the enemies of his church, whether outward or inward enemies. Is. xxvi. 21. Now, grant it be long, the Lord doth suffer them to prevail, and to be pricking briers to the hearts of God's people, and to the heart of God's Spirit in his people, yet he will come; and hence the church pleads this with God as a usual thing with him. Is. lxiv. 1–3. He comes when men look not for him, yea, he came so here; and the name of God lies upon it to make known his name to his adversaries; (Is. lxvi. 5,) "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren, that hated you and cast you out, said, Let the Lord be glorified; he shall appear to your joy; but they shall be ashamed."

Sixthly. Christ is said to come to the soul, when he comes to it at death, to abolish all sin and sorrow, and to possess the soul of immediate fellowship with himself, and at judgment when the great marriage day shall be, and the bride made ready, and the bridegroom in their perfect glory to the view of all the world. John xiv. 3. O, many a one is troubled now; the Lord is gone from it mediately to comfort it; "Let not your hearts be troubled," you have a God and his word to believe in; cleave to that, and me in it; but when death comes against me, and enemies come against me, and heart fails, and eye fails, will the Lord come? Yes, I will come again, for I go but only to prepare a place for you, and make heaven sweet and ready for you; some would have all Christ's coming here, but there is some hereafter,

Section III.

Reason 1. Because the love of Jesus Christ never fails his churches and people; love will keep men from being ever absent from the thing they love. Now look as it was with Lazarus, whom Christ loved, (John xi. 3;) he heard that he was sick, he could have come then, but he lingers and stays until he be dead, ("behold, Lazarus is dead,") yea, till he had been four days dead, and then awakens him again, and Lazarus must come forth of his grave, to show forth the everlasting love of the Son of God. Ver. 4. For there are two things in Christ's love; first, it is pure, independent, and dear, (Prov. viii. *ult.*;) hence he will not ever be absent; for, 1. If it be dependent, then we might say (as we change he changeth) he was good, but we have provoked him since, etc. 2. If independent, yet it is apt to forget; he minds me not, nor my prayers, nor sorrows. Yes, it is exceeding dear, and assures us of all; if he in love came to suffer, what will he not come to do, and that when the church is most withered, (Zech. iii. 1–3;) and hence saith the Lord, "Why sayest thou, The Lord hath forsaken me and forgotten me, when written upon the palms of my hand?" Is. xlviii. 14.

Reason 2. Lest their spirit fail; O, the Lord is very tender of that; he that bids parents not to be bitter to their children, lest their spirits fail and be provoked, will not do it himself; (Is. lvii. 17,) "He will not always contend, lest the spirit fail within him, and the souls that he hath made;" O, remember this, now how apt is the spirit of a child of God to fall upon this! what more bitter than God's absence!

Reason 3. Because to come late is many times the best time, for he comes ever in the fullness of time; if he should come sooner or later, he should not come in season to his people.

Use 1. Of unspeakable consolation to the people of God that lie under sad and heavy perplexities in respect of the Lord's absence from them, (as for you that can bear this, that say to God, Depart if he will, this concerns not you at all,) and the Lord being gone, you lie under sad thoughts that he will never return again; yes, you have now heard, he will come and return again; "Say unto Zion, Behold, your God cometh."

Object. But what? when I have been secure and careless withal.

Ans. Yes; though the virgins sleep, yet the Lord will come to them; for if his love did depend upon your watchfulness, he might never return; only it may be longer as to these, and he will awaken you sometime before he doth come; and truly to mourn for his absence is to awaken with him.

Object. But it hath been thus long before the Lord come, and therefore he will never come.

Ans. Though long, yet you see he comes at last to them; first, the cry says so, and then he comes; ministers tell you so, and it is not long after; nay, then is the very time, when so long as you look not for him, as here to these.

Section IV.

Object. But I know it not.

Ans. God keeps his best blessings (and perfumes them long in his own hand) from his own children; as Isaac, David, Abraham, etc.; but it is best you know it not.

Hast thou been seeking the Lord for his presence, (that the Lord would but see and consider thee a little,) until thine eyes fail thee? and do you think the Lord will ever forget? I tell thee, if Peter were in prison, prayers would deliver him, and fetch angels from heaven to him; though the church of God lay desolate, sins great, yet the prayer of Daniel shall bring down words of command to make all up again; "If thou be in any want, be careful in nothing," etc. "He asked thee life, thou gavest him long life, forever and ever;" nay, when thou ceasest, thy prayers have their cry, when thy mouth, when thy heart speak not; for prayers are not dead things, but living, begotten out of a living Spirit, from a living God, presented by a living Mediator, who takes them and presents them, (Heb. vii.,) and though unclean, yet being laid on that altar they become holy.

Object. O, but I am fed with nothing but promises; I can not deny them, but I feel them not; I think I shall never meet the Lord. Is. lv. 10. Look as the rain on the dry yields fruit, so my word shall give you joy and peace, and the desire of your heart. Can a man live by promises?

Ans. Hezekiah saith, "By these things (i. e., afflictions) do men live;" why not by promises? the words Christ speaketh they are spirit and life; David said, (2 Sam. xxiii. 5; Heb. x.,) "The just shall live by his faith;" and, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," i. e., wholly. It is admirable how the Israelites had a promise of the land, and many wars must they have, and yet, (Josh. xxiii. 14, 15,) "Not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord hath promised." So I say to you.

Object. O, but I have been long in trouble, and have had no peace!

Ans. Hast thou been longer than David, whose moisture was

dried up, who hath nothing to present before the Lord, (Ps. vi.) but weakness, and bones vexed, (ver. 2,) a soul vexed, (ver. 3,) and that long weary with groaning, (ver. 6,) tears in the night when others are at rest, his eyes consumed with grief, and yet, (ver. 8, 9,) "The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping, and prayer too;" sorrows cry, and sins cry also; and hence he saith, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity," etc.

Object. But I am so weak, my heart so straitened, so little light and life, and seeking I have been for more, and find it not.

Ans. If Christ's presence be sweet, and his absence bitter, that you seek not more for your lust's sake than the Lord's sake, then know that the Lord will return again, as verily as he is gone; "He will not leave thee comfortless;" you shall have that is fit for you to keep you humble and faithful; it may be one sermon may do more good than twenty; (John i. 50,) "Dost thou believe because I saw thee under the fig tree? thou shalt see greater things than these;" God hath greater things to show thee, if the Lord hath "translated thee into the kingdom of his dear Son;" hence it is said, of the "increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Is. ix. 7.

Object. But enemies may oppose us.

Ans. Let it be so; but what if the Lord be with you?

Object. But he is gone.

Ans. No; the Lord either will come before trouble to deliver you from it, as Asa when a troop came against him, (2 Chron. xv. 11,) let not a man prevail against thee; Asa had wrapped God about him, clothed himself with the majesty of God by faith. Is. liv. *penul.* They shall gather together, and shall come against them, but they shall not prosper, because the Lord is come; or if he doth stay, yet he will give them some blood and come upon them for your blood; "he that sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" but such as shed churches' blood, by God shall their blood be shed; the souls under the altar shall cry, and then comes woe; he will do so in Germany if there have been churches' blood shed; he is making way for glorious deliverance when God shall come, and the wicked shall melt away as wax; Lucifer must fall, though lifted up with pride. David was troubled with a Saul and a Doeg, (Ps. lv.,) but God shall pull them up by the roots, etc.; many of God's servants lie under reproaches and revilings, (and the wicked boast of their sin;) God shall pluck them up by the roots never to grow again. Hypocrites lie hid for a time, but all the churches shall know that the Lord is a God that searcheth the hearts. Luke xii. 1;

Ps. xii. 5, 6. No good man left, but some men of deceit and flattery, some apostates, etc. We are in fear (in this country) of enemies; we came hither to shelter ourselves under the wings of God; left our comforts for it; here we are at his posts; it is not honors we seek; and now it may be enemies are plotting, or will be coming to take us unawares, when weak, and so run away with the spoil, unless we will be bondmen to our former yoke; it may be the Lord will help then. Ez. xxxviii. 10, 20, to the end. If not, it may be the Lord will refine us more, and purge away our dross, and discover men that came hither for ordinances and for peace sake, and betray the ordinances; yet the Lord will come, and his blow shall ruin them, especially if his awake not at his cry; (Is. xxv. 9, 10,) it shall be said, when the terrible ones are blasts, "Lo, this is our God, and in this mount shall the hand of the Lord come."

Object. But still my sin continues.

Ans. The churches in the Revelations, when they have all things, yet are absent from the Lord, and sin before the Lord makes them say, "O, come, Lord Jesus;" saith Christ, "Behold, I come quickly." Christ will come at last, and forever comfort you, and be with you, and you ever with the Lord; this coming to be sure shall be, and what then though you walk through the vale of the shadow of death? the Lord is with you; and Him that is the glory of saints, the joy of angels, the rest and delight of God, whom all the ends of the earth have looked unto, shalt thou see with those eyes, and be with him forever, and then shall he give double for all thy sorrows, sins, temptations, when every one else shall leave thee, and shall rejoice and glory in thee, that ever he hath got thee, and (as he said) he will then serve thee. Luke xii. O, his coming would swallow up all our sorrows; Christ tells them of nothing but this. John xiv. I wonder at Christians that are saddened at losses and evils here; why, the Lord will come.

Section V.

Quest. How shall I know whether the Lord will come or no?

Ans. 1. If the Lord ever hath or doth make this the rest and stay of thy heart, not only for righteousness, but for all fullness of comfort, and that not only to thy conscience, but to thy heart and will; for many rest on Christ for righteousness, but what comforts their hearts? they joy in other things, and are greedy after things in the world, etc. Now, as a man that rests on Christ for righteousness, he abhors all other righteousness; so if a Christian rest on Christ for consolation, you will deny all other things

to comfort you also; (Jer. xvii. 5, 6,) "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man; he shall not see when good comes;" (Ps. xxii.,) "O Lord, why hast thou forsaken me? I trust in thee; our fathers trusted in thee, and were delivered." Yes, but not you that are so poor and vile. True, I am so in the eyes of the world, but on God have I been cast to trust to Christ for righteousness, but not for consolation, is to marry a man to pay debts, but not to live upon his house; try if it be so or no; thou feelest the Lord gone, yet thy faith is not gone from him.

2. If the Lord hath given thee a heart, whether the Lord comes or no, not to trouble thyself about success, and time of coming, as to mind the doing of his work against his coming, that thy heart is resolved and will live to him, though he never comes to thee. John ii. 5. When Mary said that wine was wanting, saith Christ, "It is not my hour;" then, "Whatever he bids you do, do it;" (Heb. x. 36;) you have need of patience; for all impatience ariseth from minding inordinately the success, what the event will be, and distracting the mind there; but (as a poor servant) when a man thinks, whether Christ come or not, these sins shall down; this argues love never to be forgotten; (Judg. x. 16;) nothing grieves the Lord and makes the Lord absent, but because grieved with sin, misery comes; now sin is removed; it may be no assurance whilst thou diest or livest; yet if resolved my soul shall follow the Lord, now it is right, etc. But if, while the Lord is now gone, your hearts are jolly and loose every way, why desire you the day of the Lord? it is darkness to you.

CHAPTER VII.

OF GOD'S COMPASSION TOWARDS WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

SECTION I.

Observ. 1. Such is the compassion of Christ to his people, that deep security can not always make the Lord to reject them, and therefore we shall find three expressions of the love and kindness of the Lord to the wise and foolish virgins also.

First. When they not only slumber, but sleep, and that long, even to the coming of the bridegroom almost, yet Christ spares them, and doth not all this while cut them off, and bury them out of his sight, as men that do forget him.

Secondly. He prevents them with awakening grace, and the Lord is up when his servants be abed, and is awakened for their

good when they are asleep, and regard not him; and first by his cry he awakens them before they shake up themselves; when once the churches fall asleep, they would sleep their long sleep, and never awaken, if the Lord should not, by some cry or other, prevent them.

Thirdly. He longs for their fellowship and company, though secure; and therefore it is not a cry of terror and wrath, the bridegroom hath forsaken you, for to have communion with you, yet he desires that you would have communion with him; O, come out to meet him; I shall wrap up all these together, because I shall be brief. Wonderful was the grace of Christ toward the old world, when, for the space of one hundred and twenty years, he waited for them, who, after they had been a hundred and nineteen secure, yet then the same Spirit that waiteth for us in these days of the gospel, preached the Lord unto them.

Jeremiah was very long speaking to Israel, (as the other prophets,) insomuch that the Lord professeth to send the king of Babylon against them; yet the Lord's heart melts; (chap. xxvi. 1–3,) "Speak unto them; it may be they will hearken, and turn, that I may repent;" so (Jer. iii.) they had polluted the law, (ver. 2,) showers are withheld, (which is no great matter,) small evils are arguments of hearts revolted from God; they did the Lord as much mischief as they could, and were secure. Ver. 3. Yet mark, wilt thou not from this time cry, My Father? Meet the Lord as thy husband? Will he keep his anger forever? Nay, the Lord cast off adulterous Israel, and they knew the cause, yet went on securely in the same sins; yet see, (ver. 14,) "Turn, O backsliding children;" (Prov. vi. 5, 6,) "How long," etc.

Section II.

Reason 1. In regard of the foolish, there is no reason, but the Lord's pity and compassion to a sinful people; he hath compassion on them because he will; for he doth not pity people only in respect of their miseries; but in respect of their sins, (2 Chron. *ult.* xvi.,) he sent his prophets among them, and they despised them, "because he had compassion on his people;" the cords of grace are let down to all sinners, blasphemers, opposers of God, etc.

Reason 2. In regard of the wise virgins, because his marriage covenant with them is not suspended on any thing on his people's part; for though there is a condition which the Lord requires of his people in marriage covenant, yet the Lord so requires it

as that he intends to work it, and undertakes to maintain it; and there is no evil in them but he promiseth in this covenant to remove; he will heal them of it, but he will not cast them off for it; hence Eph. v. 25, Christ loves his church; what, because it had loveliness? No, but that he might wash it; and if he loves it to this end, that he might wash it, then no pollution can make the Lord utterly to cast it off; if he loves because of deformities, that he might wash them away, then none can quench his love; hence no security, no carelessness, though deep, though long, so long as the marriage bond between man and wife continues; so long as no sin is committed that can break this marriage bond, so long infirmities or other distempers never separate. Now, no sin in them that are given to Christ can break the marriage bond, because it is wholly undertaken on the Lord's part; women may commit adultery and break their marriage bond, because they are not kept by their husband from that; but the Lord undertakes this for his people, "to put his fear in their heart, that they shall never depart from God;" (Hos. ii. 19, 20,) "I will betroth thee unto me forever, and you shall know the Lord;" hence the Lord may humble, but never utterly reject his for security in a lust.

SECTION III.

Use 1. Of direction and thankfulness to the people of God; O, do not always fall to fits of doubts after security, though deep and long, as many Christians do, and so are ever laying and pulling up foundations, after most peace of conscience, most security, and then the sea rageth again, and it is hard for any man to keep his peace; have you had such mercy, and love, and will you thus be careless and loose again? believe it, the Lord will break your bones if you love your beds, and not give you rest till you find it on another pillow; but yet do not deny his love, though you have forgot; do not say you are not virgins, because fallen asleep; and that the bridegroom will never come to meet you, because you have lingered in meeting him; for "behold, he cometh." I know there is a difference between security of the wise and foolish; of which hereafter. The disciples fall asleep in the garden after a treble warning, yet it was against much reluctancy; hence Christ pitied them; "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" and when they were awakened, their vessels were not found empty; Peter's vessel was full of love to Christ before, and when the Lord awakens him, he tells him he loved him; and his fall and security for a

time made him more humble, and love the Lord with less self-confidence, and more purity; but, O, wonder at it, rejoice in it, and be thankful for it! especially you that have fallen into any secure frame since ye came into these virgin churches; which you can not but do, if you consider the greatness of this sin; to sin and be long secure, and fast asleep, is strange.

1. This is the great provoking sin; look throughout all the book of God, let the sin be great, and immediately after conscience-smitten, bones broken, and heart awakened, we shall never see the Lord but he is pacified; the Lord hears their groanings, and remembers his covenant; but little sins fallen into and by security continued in, the Lord visits for this; (Ps. l.) when a man shall not only sin, but take delight in it, as a man doth in his sleep.

2. This is a sin in places of liberty and ordinances, whereas the Lord was never so good to thee, and thy heart never worse to him; never so secure; you thought and purposed never to be so watchful and tender as now; to be secure here greatly aggravates security.

3. This sin is a common sin: now this adds to a sin, when a man has a hand in a national sin, that runs in the blood of all the churches; for so you see it is all the virgins secure; when all forget the Lord, as though there were not enough to lay more load upon the Lord, what doth this but harden others in security? thy wives' heart, thy brethren's heart, such a one is secure; as though it were not enough to fight against the Lord, but giant-like to fall among the troops of them that securely dishonor the Lord: when the old world was secure, we heard nothing of that; but when the sons of God came to be secure, and all flesh corrupted their ways, the Lord falls a mourning, and repents that he had made man: when any sin groweth general in churches, that sin is most grievous to God; princes' children when they sin alone, it is grievous, but when they take part with all the mutinous crew against their father, this strikes deep; O, that ever mine eyes should see this evil!

4. It is a sin which is the last, and is the ruin of all the foolish virgins, and perfects their perdition, as here it did; they slept till it was too late; O, that the Lord should not cast you off for this! admire at this, and let thy heart, and house, and work be filled with praise for this; you have complained long of a secure heart; see it humble thee, that it continueth; but make thee wonder, that the Lord will not cast thee off.

Section IV.

Use 2. To all those that have been long secure, let this compassion of the Lord awaken you, and draw you to him; and make you come out and meet him; and give entertainment to the Lord, who hath not yet cast you off from him, but yet cries, O, come and meet me: methinks this should awaken you; what, hath not the Lord cast me off yet? no! but his cry this day is, O, come out and meet me! the Lord might have cut thee off in thy security; this is his season to others, when men cry peace, peace; and he might have let thee slept, and never awake more till past hope; yet here is his grace, O, come and meet him! and will you despise it, and refuse the Lord?

Object. 1. I have no oil in my vessel, no grace in my heart; what should I meet for him, or look for him! I am so vile and so secure, he can not look upon me.

Ans. 1. You have the more need of receiving him as your bridegroom, that so you may receive the eternal anointing of his Spirit of grace and life in your hearts.

2. Now you have time to get both.

Object. 2. But it is long before the bridegroom comes; there is time enough for this hereafter.

Ans. 1. Would you never look after the Lord, and being betrothed to him, till the very time of his coming? will you despise grace to the utmost, and weary out grace to the last gasp? Behold, the Lord shall come, and thy eye shall see him, and wail because of him; and the Lord will make thee cry out on thy death bed, and warn others to take heed of trifling with the Lord long, who didst never take warning thyself.

2. You see, when the cry is made, the bridegroom is not far behind; now is his cry, and you see some that did awaken, and after the cry, had time too little to trim their lamps. It may be many cries have been sounding in thy secure ears; and yet there is time; he is not come; grant it; and will you therefore despise this rich grace the more because of his goodness?

Object. 3. But I am well as I am without the bridegroom.

Ans. It may be sleep is sweet for the present; but if thou wert awakened, thou wouldst be of another mind; there are many here present that can say, they thought themselves well, etc., but now I see my error, etc. O Lord, what if I had been left to these thoughts! yet this is ever the frame of a secure heart, (like swine,) well when it is in the mire, basking in the sun.

1. It is pleasure; but consider, it is but short; long security

will end in hideous affrights, and doleful awakenings, for one day's short sleep: I remember Nineveh's are set out by this. Zeph. ii. 15. "This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly;" painting out their misery for this sin above all the rest; so when plagues be upon you, God and angels shall point at you, this is the secure sinner that lived loosely.

2. It deprives you of more rest and ease; carnal security keeps a man from knowing spiritual security; while your sin and sleep is sweet, the grace of Christ and the sense of his love shall be strangers to you, and to your hearts; Christ is anointed to preach to a weary, not to a sleepy sinner. Is. l. 4. There are seasons of refreshings and coolings, which such shall never know.

3. This, which is thy pleasure, is the Lord's sorrow and grief; look as when the sinner mourneth under his sin, the Lord's heart is quieted; (Zeph. iii. 17, 18,) "I said I would confess, and thou forgivest." So when a man delights in his sin, the Lord's soul is then grieved; and the more delight the more grief; Christ mourned for the hardness of their hearts. Mark v. 3. Now, grant that you have this pleasure, yet what joy is it to think, that while I have my ease and peace, the Lord hath his burden! my rest and peace is the Lord's sorrow in heaven; when the sons of God grew fleshly, the Lord repented that he had made man. O, let the groanings of a compassionate God awaken you out of this security!

Section V.

Object. But there is none secure here.

Ans. It is hard for wise not to fall here; but for foolish not to fall to this sin, at least to be long preserved from it, will be miraculous; but for the most part of men not to be drowned in it.

1. Have not divers lived and never been awakened at all, not so much as to cry out, I am a damned man; what shall I do? thou never hadst a spark of eternal flames of wrath to kindle thy conscience, and that after an ignorant and profane life.

2. If you have been troubled, have you not fallen asleep before ever you have gotten any settled peace and comfort in the blood of Christ, only hast got so much oil as makes thy lamp burn, and gives thee a name to live, when thy vessel is empty and heart is dead?

3. Have not many, nay, most, of thy days been spent without any sorrow for, or reckoning concerning, thy sin? It may be you have a lent and a cleansing week sometimes; but most commonly

it is otherwise, that you never see sin, but sleep in it, and set yourselves to go on, having found no hurt in such a course as yet.

4. How many use the ordinances of God, come to them, but never gain good by them! What, is there no gold in these mines? Yes; but a slothful, secure heart will not dig for them.

5. Nay, do not God's cries make thee sleep the faster? he taketh away a great part of thy estate from thee, and thou lookest upon the misery and shame of rags and poverty; and thy heart dieth away with discontent, and grows more worldly. If light be darkness, if means of wakening be a means of sleeping, how great is that security! O, therefore, go out and meet the bridegroom.

Section VI.

Quest. But how shall I receive the Lord as my bridegroom and husband?

Ans. 1. See what thy widowhood is, and forsaken condition; (Is. liv. 5, 6,) "When thou wast refused, the Lord loved thee;" what creature can help thee, when the Lord forsakes thee? what a misery is it to live out of a father's house!

2. See his love that he makes to you; otherwise you will never conclude it, but sink, saying, "The Lord forgets me." O, see his love he makes to thee to receive him; and that thou wouldst give thy consent to have him, that thou mayst love him. Is. lvi. 6. A carnal heart, a whorish lover desires to close with Christ, that Christ may give gifts to it, and love it; but a virgin that she may love the Lord, and be wholly his; and this will answer all doubts; what have you to do with Christ, and all that mercy, grace, and glory? O, it is that I may love the Lord more.

Object. It is presumption.

Ans. No, it is that I may love the Lord indeed; and now, when the heart is drawn here, (Ps. xlv. 10,) "Then shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty;" pleasure in thee, and all that thou dost: what, in me, that I am weary of myself? Yes, in thee. 1. When he forsakes others, he will meet thee. 2. Though he departs, and sorrows attend thee, yet thy sorrows shall be turned into joy, and he will see thee again, and never cease delighting in thee, but wrap thee up in everlasting embracings.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF CHRIST'S COMING, AND HIS AWAKENING SLEEPING CHRISTIANS.

Ver. 7. *Then all the virgins arose and trimmed, etc.*

Section I.

In these words, to ver. 10, is set down the effect which the cry had upon the virgins.

First. Upon all of them in general, in this seventh verse.

Secondly. Upon the foolish in particular, in the next verses.

First. The effect it wrought upon all of them in general, both good and bad, is set down in two things: 1. They did all arise; i. e., they were thoroughly awakened out of their secure condition. 2. Being awakened, they fell to their work, which was to trim their lamps, as to beautify and adorn their lamps, which had now lost their light and beauty by soiling themselves, and all through neglect; now they trimmed them, when, first, they wiped off the soil. *Secondly.* Made search for that which was necessary for the shining glory of them; thus far the foolish trimmed their lamps, who yet did not find that oil in their vessels, which was the main thing to beautify them indeed, which the wise had; so that they all trimmed their lamps; the wise trimmed theirs indeed; the foolish theirs, so well as they could.

Observ. 1. That the serious real apprehension of the nearness of Christ's coming is enough to awaken thoroughly the most secure virgins. I say, if virgins, (especially that have been awakened to know any thing of the Lord's coming,) this will awaken them; for when the cry was made, He cometh! now they all arose; whilst he did tarry, as they thought, then they sleep; but when the cry comes that he is near and coming, O, now they awake.

This coming is meant either of his coming to the last judgment, or of his coming to particular judgment immediately at and after death. I shall apply myself chiefly to the coming of Christ, at death, to his people, because this doth chiefly concern us; the near approach of this will awaken, when apprehended near.

Rom. xiii. 11. When the apostle would awaken them out of security, "Your salvation now is nearer than when you first believed;" i. e., that perfect salvation which is at that time; now, if the apprehension that it is nearer than at first awakens, much more when it is apprehended so indeed. James v. 8, 9. There,

it seems, divers that were oppressed, and they ready to faint and forsake the Lord, and wait no more; what, therefore, doth he do? "The coming (saith he) of the Lord draweth nigh."

1 Sam. xii. 19. When Samuel told them before that misery should come if they would have a king, they cared not; now, when thunder came, that they saw death and the Lord near them, now they feared, and cried, and repented; O, we die, say they; pray for us. It is with the soul as it is with seamen, when they first set out in the main, if the wind be good, and all things well, they take their rest and sleep, though going nearer every day than another; but when they apprehend they are near the shore, now they look out, though in the night; so here.

Section II.

Reason 1. Because here a man sees an end of his sinful way, and of all his delights which have bound him up in the bonds of security. A soft bed, and an easy pillow, and much feeding in a place of rest, will procure much sleeping; the heart of a man would never be secure if it had not some delight or other to quiet itself withal. Now, at Christ's coming there is an end of it; then a man is stripped naked of all his greatness and honor, friends, blessings; and when a man sees an end, and is come to an end of his sinful way, now all a man's delights and hopes perish. The beginning of a sinful course is sweet and beautiful, (like pictures seen afar off beautiful,) but the end is gall and wormwood; for every sinful secure course is sweet in appearance or in deed. If only in hope and conception, as in a dream, when the end comes, all a man's hopes perish. If, indeed, it hath been sweet, now there is the more grief; now my heart, my life, my blood must be taken from me, and what profit is there now in this my stubborn way? When a man is sinking, and the boat is breaking, what a miserable wretch now! Lord, help! Hence, (Ezek. vii. 3, 6,) when an end is come, now they fling their silver in the streets; O, the stumbling-block of mine iniquity! (ver. 18, 19;) now "they shall seek peace, and shall not find it," (ver. 25;) now "they shall seek a vision of the prophet." Ver. 26. Like a man that is drawn into a fair way, and is out of that his way, when he comes to an end, and is forsaken of all, left in a wood, now that is the profit.

Reason 2. Because at his coming there is the entrance and passage into eternity, and into an eternal state of weal or woe; now, though the apprehension of the end of a secure sinful way may and will awaken, yet when eternity is apprehended it will

amaze; for this time is but a little spring or river which runs into eternity, and carries all men living down with it to eternity. Now, when men see an end of time and the beginning of eternity, and themselves posting thereto, it is as when a man sees himself floating upon the waters, where there is no bottom, and all stay gone; though he hath been long secure, now he will cry out if he sees it. It is with men now as it is with those that are ready to be cast down from some tower; it makes the heart tremble; O, where shall I alight! O, it is impossible but if men do apprehend eternity, and that also near unto them, but it will awaken them; it will make a stout, stony-hearted Saul to run to Urim; it will make kings and princes run to monasteries, and men to cells and deserts; it will make the proudest Felix tremble when Paul reasons of judgment to come. It is usually the first thing that doth awaken the people of God; eternity doth amaze them, and them that have fallen to all lasciviousness. O, eternity!

Reason 3. Because of the terror at the coming of the Lord, (Rev. vi. *ult.*,) to them that be unprovided and unprepared; hence it is, and will be, when an evil is near, fear will fly out. Men as men will do it, unless they be walking-blocks and brutes. For,—

1. Then they are to stand naked before the Lord so great and holy.

2. Then shall they have all their sins set in order, (Ps. l. 21,) and especially those secret sins which they never saw, and whereby they did perfect their own perdition.

3. Then the final sentence passed, never to be recalled again, and they shall know it; for if there might be a day to repent, then some hope; but if not, O, this awakens.

4. Then to be surrendered up into the hands of devils, to be kept by that jailer in prison, (1 Pet. iii. 19,) "until the coming of the great day;" and so to be kept in their custody, and to be in their fellowship, looking back, and mourning for time misspent, looking to time to come, shortly to meet my body, and then to be parted forever from the Lord! O, when this evil is apprehended, it will awaken a man to search and look about him.

Section III.

Use 1. Hence see a great cause of the deep and long security of many a man, and that, in virgin churches, under all awakening means, ordinances, and providences of God; men put far from them this day of death, and time of Christ's coming; they

think seldom of it, come not near to it, nor make it near to them; sometimes they complain of a dead, sluggish spirit, secure heart, and yet remain so, and wonder sometimes at the reason of it, why it should be so. Why? This is one reason of it, either you think not of this coming of the Lord, or see it not near, even at the door, but number many days to yourselves, and this is the cause of it; you do not lodge in, nay, look to your coffins, and walk to your grave side often, and so stand there and hear the cry, and see the Lord a-coming; there will be more in what I say than what you see at first blush of this truth; but this I know, and the word proves it, universal security ariseth from hence. As for instance,—

1. Why do men mind the things of the world so much? that there is such care for them, such eager desire after them, that many times prayer is neglected, Sabbaths neglected; when will they be at an end? God neglected, souls of wife, children, servants, a man's own soul neglected and overgrown with nettles; that there is such a high opinion, dreams of worldly goods, and when a man hath them, then at rest; because with the glutton, they think they have goods for many a year; and hence we shall see when a man waketh, death is near to him; and when it is near to a man, now he thinks he hath been deceived in all the things of the world, that they are not good for him; (1 Cor. vii. 29.) "The time is short, and the fashion of the world passeth away;" nothing makes these things so sought after and good but only esteem; now this is because men look only to things present.

2. Why do men's hearts sink with the meanness of their outward condition, and the troubles of it? (for this is security:) it is because of this, they do not remember the nearness of the coming of the Lord; it is but a little while longer, and then the God I have chosen will alone be sweet, and he will make me amends for all my troubles, and therefore let me bear up my head a little while. Ps. xxxix. When David's heart began to be troubled by seeing others' prosperity, his own misery, "Lord," saith he, "make me to know my end and the measure of my days; mine age is as a hand breadth;" hence, (ver. 7,) "Lord, what hope I for? truly, my hope is in thee."

3. Why are men puffed up with their own excellences, and filled with such pride and high conceits of themselves, sometimes of their beauty, sometimes of their apparel, sometimes their friends, sometimes their esteem, and they value themselves much by this? men consider not the coming of the Lord, which shall

stain the pride of all glory, (Is. xxiii. 8,) and that this time is near.

4. Why do people complain they can not prize the Lord or his ordinances as they could? Why do men on their death beds then prize it, — then pray, then hear? then, O, little mercy, then send for Moses, then the Lord is righteous; and if he show mercy, never such a pattern as now, because now death and Christ's coming is near; you do therefore undervalue the gain of ordinances, because of this; if you did, you would glory in nothing but the Lord. Jer. ix. 21, 23.

5. Why do men go up and down without any assurance of the Lord's love, or the truth of any grace, and that after conviction? why do men upon their death beds seek for it, and then fall a searching, and then open their estates, and then desire peace? because the coming of the Lord is near; you put the day of the Lord far from you; if you saw it near, you would get on your armor in readiness against the day of battle; if your husband be at the door, you would get on your apparel. Ps. lxxxix. 46, 47, 49.

6. Why is so much time spent unfruitfully, that a Christian is not abundant in doing and receiving good? who is the better for thy speeches, for thy prayers, for thy example? When Moses (Ps. xc.) had numbered men's days, then, (ver. 17,) "stablish thou the work of our hands upon us:" look upon a Christian at first conversion; he thinks he shall not live long; it is strange to see what prayers, what tears; how fruitful, how diligent he is; O, therefore, see your sore this day; it is night almost; O, therefore up and be doing.

Section IV.

Use 2. O, therefore, if ever you would be freed from this infectious, this damning sin and plague of security, make the coming of the Lord near unto you, and come you near unto it, be ever near it; number your days, they are soon told over, and often think of your latter end and when the bridegroom comes; for this will awaken you out of your secure fits, and make you fall hard to your work.

First. This will make you do much work for the Lord in a little time; when Moses was to be gathered to his fathers, now he provides for the church, now he instructs the people more than ever concerning their estates, etc.

Secondly. It will be very sweet; it is but a very little while, though it be bitter, and it will put strength to do it; work is wearisome for want of strength; so Christ's work is wearisome,

because we want strength; now this doth put strength into the soul. James v. 8, 9.

Thirdly. It will be very glorious; works even of dying men are very glorious and successful; speeches of living (yet dying Christians) sink deep; for then God is near unto us when we are near unto him, and see things as they are; and hence such speeches are commonly blessed to men; the speeches, and works, and carriages of Christ were never so glorious as when most near his end.

Section V.

Object. But should a Christian in Christ use this as a motive to stir up his heart, or no? this is mockery, this philosophy sends men to; doth divinity do so? a Christian must be acted by love, not fear.

Ans. 1. That which God hath sanctified for this end we may make use of for the attainment of it; now God hath sanctified afflictions, death, and the fear of them for this end, to awaken the secure sinner; Jehosaphat fears and proclaimeth a fast; Noah feared and built an ark; Christ himself to the church of Sardis (to awaken her) professeth, "he will come as a thief in the night suddenly." 2 Pet. iii. "If the heavens shall be dissolved, what manner of persons should we be?" It is true, it is hypocrisy for a man to be led only by fear; but it is profaneness (the original of the Sadducees) not to be terrified at all; it is not hypocrisy to be awakened partly by a fear to the apprehension of these things; for God hath sanctified them for this end, and though these do not work grace (where there is none before) barely, yet the awakening of conscience is that whereby the Lord prepares for grace; and this is good in its kind; and it stirs up grace where it was before, as here this cry makes the virgins to kindle their oil, and set that a-burning.

Object. 2. But the time is not near; should I apprehend an untruth?

Ans. It may be it is near; the apprehension of this is not false, and this the Lord gives, (ver. 13,) as the ground of constant watch, "for you know not when he comes;" now if men love their goods, they will watch.

2. It is near; if you had but wisdom to see into eternity, and the nature of time, you would say so also; (Ps. xc. 4,) "A thousand years are but as yesterday, and as a watch in the night." Ver. 5, our time is as a sleep, short and vain. Ver. 6, "It is but as a flower of one day's glory; nay, it is but as a thought." Ver. 9, It is so when you see things as they are, and you will account it

so; O, therefore, let me beg this of you, make Christ's coming and death near to you, that you may be delivered from your dead palsies, deep slumbers, and dying sick-sleeps; especially seeing the signs of the Lord's coming to reckon with you, do you think to escape? Masters that betrust servants with most, will they call others to account, to whom they have betrusted less, and not you? What people under heaven are trusted with more mercies and liberties than we? and do you think he is gone to a far country, and will never return? He let Palatine and other churches enjoy the means long, he summons them to account by famine, sword, and pestilence, wild beasts, and cruel soldiers; and shall he never ride in his circuit this way? yes, verily. Do you boast in the goodly stones of this temple? If the Lord, by your security, be despised, and his messengers, and ordinances, and kingdom, he will not leave one stone upon another. When will this be? not yet, that is true; yet awake at the signs of it; (Matt. xxiv.,) "Wars, rumors of wars, famine, earthquakes, deceivers that come in the name of Christ, apostasy of professors, whence many come to be offended; divisions and scatterings of one brother against another, iniquity abounding in the world, and love growing cold in churches." If these be not amongst us now, we have the less cause to fear; if so, have we not cause to awake one hour, considering our time is nigh? if not, yet Christ's time is nigh of coming to particular persons.

Section VI.

Quest. How shall I make it near?

Ans. Truly, till the Lord teach us the number of our days, we can never do it: yet three things do.

First. Convince thy soul of the sin and evil of looking after to-morrow, and reaching after that time which is to come. Prov. xxvii. 1. 1. It is none of thine. 2. Nothing draws the heart so much from God. 3. You will never find what you expect hence; these are lying vanities, therefore come not to these wells.

Secondly. Either thou wantest assurance; then fear his coming; for fear will make misery present, and so awaken; and hope (*e contra*) good present; — or thou hast assurance; then love his coming, see all thy good wrapped up there; and love will make things absent beloved, and present comfort in the thoughts of them; as wicked men that love the things of this life, and are in certain hopes to have them, they oft rejoice in the hopes; because the good is present, they reckon upon it as theirs already.

Thirdly. See how near you are unto the Lord Jesus. 1. That you are made for the Lord, not to enjoy these things; they are made for you, and not you to serve them; because God hath called you out of this world, from the grave, hell, sin, to life; now the next is glory. 2 Cor. v. 3–5.

2. That there is nothing but thy breath, thy body, between thee and Jesus Christ; when this shell is broken, thou art with the Lord, and shalt see him with open face; this will make you look for the day of delivery.

CHAPTER IX.

OF CHRISTIANS TRIMMING THEIR LAMPS, AND HOW HOLINESS IS THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORY.

And trimmed their Lamps.

SECTION I.

THE word *trimmed* signifies adorned, beautified their lamps, made clean, or cleansed; it is the same word which is used 1 Tim. ii. 9: "Women's adorning, let it not be with pearls, but good works."

Quest. What is the glory of the lamp?

Ans. First. When the filth is wiped away, which did defile it.

Secondly. When oil is gotten, and the lamp is lighted; now it is in its full trim, as it was at first, when they went out; whilst they were sleeping, their lamps, not being looked into, began to lose their shining glory; now they recover them.

Object. But how came the foolish to trim their lamps?

Ans. They did endeavor it, and did something that way, as is apparent from the context, and so they trimmed them so far as they could reach; but the complete and full adorning of them was this of the wise. And therefore look, as by oil in the vessel is meant the eternal anointing of the Spirit of grace within, so by shining is meant the glorious profession arising from it, as the adorning of women (1 Tim. ii. 9) is their holy conversation.

Observ. 2. That the Spirit of holiness abiding in the hearts and shining in the lives of saints, it is their excellency, ornament, and glory. This adorns the virgins' lamps; through security they began to lose their glory. Now, when they prepare

their lamps, they adorn their lamps; and this is their glory. 2 Cor. iii. *ult.*, "We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory;" grace and holiness is glory. Eph. v. 27, Christ presents a glorious church; wherein? "without spot or wrinkle, and holy before the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 4. Sanctification and honor are joined together.

Section II.

Quest. What Spirit of holiness is it which is a Christian's glory?

Ans. It is not every patched profession of holiness which is a Christian's true glory; for by what means is the name of God more blasphemed by the wicked of the world, than by those that profess holiness, yet break out into scandalous sins? Rom. ii. 14. It is a wonder if a profane man be good a little; but it is a greater wonder and scandal if a professor be bad a little. Neither is it a most glorious appearance of holiness; this is deceit, craft, and hypocrisy, not a glory. A stageplayer, that acts the part of a king, wants the glory of a king; and hence Paul opposeth himself to these. 2 Cor. v. 12. But when there is first an exemplary holiness, arising, secondly, from the fullness of the Spirit of grace within, as here in the virgins, a shining profession from an inward Spirit, when Christ hath attained the end of offering up himself, "that men are a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Suppose the lamp doth burn, yet if not for the end it was made, so that a man can scarcely see his way, nor others by it, its glory is much lost. Now, the end of the Spirit of holiness is this, the end of Christ's death and ministry is this; (Phil. ii. 13, 14,) and though they may speak evil, yet (1 Pet. ii. 12) they may glorify God in that day; when it is with men as it is with those. Zech. viii. *ult.* "We have seen God is in you;" when a man maintains a sleepy, careless profession and name, the lamp now wants its trim; when lamps are put under bushels, they lose their glory.

Quest. 2. Before whom is this their glory?

Ans. 1. Before the eyes of God the Father. John xii. 26. "He that shall serve me, him shall my Father honor;" and though the world honor them not, yet they shall be spectators of it.

2. Before Jesus Christ's eyes. Ps. xlv. 11, "Forget thy country and thy father's house, so the king shall take pleasure in thy beauty."

3. Before all the people of God themselves. 2 Thess. i. 4, 5,

"So that we glory of you among all the churches;" every one will be speaking of such; O, there is one of a thousand; hardly shall you go into his company but you shall get some good, and life and heat from him.

4. Before hypocrites many times, who of all others are the greatest haters of the ways of holiness and the power of godliness; hence Herod (Mark vi. 20) loved John, because a holy man, not because a deep scholar, or a great man; hence, while Joshua and the elders live, the people serve the Lord; and while Jehoiada lives, Joash is forward; the greatest monarchs fall down here.

5. In the eyes of bad men, and hence, (Deut. iv. 6, 7,) when they kept the statutes of the Lord, what nation so great, as hath such laws, and so wise also! this is their better part, (2 Cor. v. 11,) "we are manifest in their consciences;" and hence the worst say often, if all were such as they are, etc.

Quest. 3. When is it their glory?

Ans. 1. In this life, (as hath been already showed,) in midst of reproaches, the Spirit of glory, (1 Pet. iv. 14,) in midst of weaknesses, David's heart was perfect.

2. At the great and last day; let a man by his wisdom, conquests, excellencies, get himself a name, yet when death comes, his glory perisheth; if it doth last, yet not long; the greatest monarchs have been like a mighty wind, filled the world with a noise for a time, and then down; but at the last day, then, O their shame, what everlasting contempt shall they arise unto! But this shall be our glory at the last day; (1 Pet. i. 5–7,) "which shall be to glory and praise at the coming of our Lord;" and it is said, "then shall the righteous shine as the sun;" and then "all the world shall stand and admire, and wonder at them." And, —

3. Throughout all eternity this shall be their glory, even "an everlasting name unto them, better than the name of sons and daughters;" when the wicked shall see them all at the right hand of God, and gnash their teeth, that themselves are shut out, when the Lord and his saints shall take infinite delight one in another. Luke xii. 37.

Section III.

Quest. 4. Why is this a Christian's glory, excellency, and honor?

Ans. 1. In regard of the baseness of other things wherein men do use to glory; the wise man in his wisdom, the strong man in

his strength, the rich man in his wealth: there are three things which make these base.

First. These things make a man not the more to be accepted of God; the Lord respects not, values not the worth of any man by these things; and to make all the world know this, "he staineth the pride of all glory, and chooseth the poor and foolish things of the world to confound the wise;" a wise man will never respect the horse the more because it carries store of rich treasures, he will not fall down and reverence it for this; hang swine about with pearls, who honors them the more? and will a wise God respect a man the more for these things? 1 Pet. iii. 5. What is that that is of great price with God? Holiness is of great price with God: and what though all the world honor a man, and a man honoreth himself, while this is wanting?

Secondly. All these things leave a man dead under the reign of Satan, power of his sin and dominion of death; and hence, (Jer. ix. 24,) "Let no man glory in his wisdom," etc. Death is entered into your windows; take any bondman bound with fetters, (though golden,) doth any man account him the more glorious? a prince that is made a vassal and slave to every base fellow, is he the more glorious? no; so whiles men lie under the reign of death; stick a man that is dead with flowers, what! is he the more glorious? alas! no; his life is gone; now the Spirit of holiness is called the Spirit of life, even of the life that never shall die. Rom. viii. And therefore, as it is said of a fly, there is more excellency in a gnat than in a cedar, than in the glorious heaven, because it hath life, which the other hath not, so, though men wonder at the goodly trappings of wicked men, yet the poorest and most despised Christian, that hath the Spirit of life, is more glorious.

Thirdly. Because these things only purchase the more credit and honor in the eyes of men, and that of wicked men; for, (1 Cor. v. 10,) "We know no man after the flesh;" if they do, it is that which they account themselves beasts and fools for, as David did. Ps. lxxiii. And what is the honor of man? it is the basest thing that is; for it is that which is without a man, it is no excellency within the man; it is but the thoughts of a man's head and heart, than which, what more vain, what more mutable? nay, it is but the dreams of a man's head, for they are mistakes: if all the town should dream another was a king, who yet were indeed a beggar, (which when they awake they see,) what were he the better for this? Paul, (2 Cor. ix. 22,) how he doth glory in privileges, which were better and more

goodly hangings than these! "this," saith he, "I speak as a fool;" and what are these? a Christian's glory? no, surely.

Ans. 2. Because that is a Christian's glory which is Christ's glory.

First. It is that glory wherein the glory of Christ consists. Ps. iv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children of men, full of grace is thy lips;" and, (2 Cor. iii. *ult.*,) "into the same image from glory to glory." Indeed, Christ's greatness in governing the world is his glory, but it is because it is mixed with such holiness, (Is. vi. 1–3; Phil. ii. 8, 9,) "he humbled himself," and this hath given him a name, and shall be his name forever; this is that which makes the Lord Jesus lovely and amiable in the eyes of all his people; (Rev. xv. 4,) "Who would not fear thee? for thou only art holy." And so he is, for all the stars receive their light and shine with it, by this sun only; and so the more a Christian excels in this, the more like he is to Jesus Christ, and so more glorious and lovely.

Secondly. This is that which gives him glory, i. e., so far as creatures can; and hence, (Is. xlvi. 13,) Israel is called "the glory of the Lord;" (Is. lxii. 2, 3,) the righteous is called "the glory, and crown, and diadem in the hand of the Lord;" and as God is better than the soul, so this, viz., to glorify the Lord, is better than to be glorified by the Lord.

Section IV.

Use 1. Hence see one reason why men lose their honor, their love and respect in the eyes of God and men; their judgments are not reverenced, their persons not accepted, their names and practices despised; this is one reason among the rest, a decay in holiness; the lamp is defiled, the light and luster of it going out; and who will reverence it then? It is admirable to see the complaints abroad.

First. Look but into families; what is the reason there is so much discontent there, that servants are weary of their masters, masters of their servants? and there are such complaints one of another, little respect one of another? It is for want of holiness, power, and life of godliness; the master saith the servant is unruly, froward, surly, slothful, unfaithful, untrusty, and must not be spoken to; the servant saith, his master is passionate, unkind, wants pity to his body, and sometimes strikes him without cause, but is eaten up with the world, etc.: truly this is the cause. It seems the Lord wrought upon divers in primitive times, and the apostle gives servants an item, "that they may

glorify God, and adorn the gospel of the Lord Jesus;" (Tit. ii. 10,) how came Joseph into Potiphar's books? O, he was very holy, and very prudent; and I will warrant, did his master's work better when his master was absent than before, and prayed for success in his business, as Abraham's servant. Look but upon husband and wife; it is strange to see what divisions and jars there; and what is the cause of it? wife doth not honor husband, nor husband honor wife; how comes this? O, there is little holiness seen in their private walking one with another; the woman thought the man godly; had I known this, I would have seen you a hundred miles off, etc.; the man also complains of his wife; I see now I am like to be troubled with a continual dropping, a very fury of hell, so impatient, (and the next neighbor hears of it,) nothing can please her; what is the reason of this? your sin makes your shame, and there is the want of holiness; (1 Pet. iii. 3,) the man might be converted by the wife, and the wife by the husband; not that it is always so, but usually so.

Secondly. Look into churches; what is the reason people lose their honor much in the hearts of ministers? he respects others, but not me; and sometimes they think, now he strikes at me, and meaneth me, and then the heart swells, etc. What is the reason that Paul professeth he will come with a rod among the Corinthians? they were babes, and carnal, and contentious, and puffed up, little love and life: and what is the reason he sets out the Thessalonians so? (1 Thess. i. 5:) because of this they did abound, and hence commended of all saints; hence want of growth and holiness; they travail in birth till Christ be formed, and when they can not see that, hence they are in throes for you; what is the reason ministers lose their glory among people? I confess it is not always for decay here; for John in prison did not lose his holiness; and hence, when they despised him, Christ commended him, and his reward was with the Lord; it was not a testimony of his unholiness, but a forerunner of the end of his days, as well as of the end of his work; and hence, when all Asia forsook Paul, (2 Tim. iv. 16,) it was the time of his departing now at hand. But that which is the cause of it, many times, is want of holiness within; and hence, though men see not, yet the Lord will not give a false testimony, nor let men do so; hence neither judgments nor their speeches reverenced; or because men see not the ancient Spirit of holiness; hence no mourning for them in secret, no holiness in speeches; they smell of the field, not walking as patterns before them, (Mal. ii. 8, 9,) not caring for the flock which Christ hath purchased with his own blood. What is the reason there is that complaint of want

of love one man to another, one member to another, who are bound by covenant to it, such jars, divisions, etc.? Truly nothing makes so firm a union between man and man as holiness and grace; this tieth the knot; and it is not holiness hid, but now seen; it not being seen, hence come all your breaches; it is impossible else such small things should make it. O, a tender heart and the life of Christ is not indeed seen; a holy man exact shall never want love, that in every company scatters something, that, like Christ, goes up and down doing good, healing the diseases of men's hearts; there is a man I could die with him in my very bosom. I am persuaded the decay of holiness in the lives of men is the cause why sanctification is questioned as an evidence of justification; and hence division.

Thirdly. Look abroad into the world; what is the reason the churches lie among the pots, and are soiled with so many disgraces, that though we be the people of the Lord, yet we are not called so? why, jars, divisions, earthliness, want of love and mercy, murmurings, loss of former life. When Jews are shining with the glory of God, kings and all nations shall bring in their glory to them. O, consider this! sin doth make you vile in God's eyes and man's eyes. Many complain they can not be respected, nor received; this is the cause of it, you excel not here; others take notice of your unrighteousness, unholiness of life; there is some evil in their bargaining and buying, and ill language from the people of God. O, therefore, go home and lament this as she, The glory of God is departed from Israel; so do you here.

Section V.

Use 2. Hence see, when the Lord doth honor us to do his work, what little cause there is to seek honor of men, (nay, though all the world's glory be taken from you,) because it is honor enough to do the Lord's work; would you have more honor than Christ? this was his beauty, glory, and honor; God hath an everlasting name for you, though you have disgrace by it, nay, though no success, yet (Is. xlix. 5) glorious in the Lord's eye. O, it was a sweet course of Barak, (Judg. iv. 9,) thou shalt lose honor; that is all one, said she, let me do the Lord's work, though it be in a difficult work of pursuing the Lord's enemies; what profit have you on the other side, when you seek it in your pitchers? what company? etc.; this was Saul's sin. 1 Sam. xv. 30. O, worship and honor me nevertheless this time before the people; it is his reward, and it is the devil's sin to be puffed up; this pulled down Nebuchadnezzar;

Herod was smote with worms, because he gave not glory to God, but took it to himself. It was a heavy speech to Eli, (1 Sam. 2, 29,) Because thou honorest thy sons above me, this and that I will do unto thee. Nay, though men are so holy as to honor God with their lips, yet God will blast the wisdom of the wise for it. O, therefore, let this be enough, and then you will not hunger after other honor; for this is glory and honor enough, and you have thought so when yourselves, O, if I may but honor the Lord, it is enough.

Use 3. Hence see what little cause any wicked man hath to lift up his head with any glory he hath, because the spirit of holiness, beauty, and glory is departed from them; as when the soul is departed from the body, its glory and beauty is departed from them, it is withered; and therefore we shall read in Scripture what names the Lord gives them, as dogs, swine, serpents, a generation of vipers, painted sepulchers, devils in the time of the greatest profession, as Judas; (John vi.) "wild beasts," and that in the greatest outward glory; and hence the four monarchies of the world are resembled to such beasts, bears, leopards, etc.; thus for their persons; and as for their actions, all they do is unclean and ignoble, and hence compared to thistles, that can not bring forth figs or grapes; and hence Solomon compares them, "As jewels in a swine's snout, so is a parable in the mouth of a fool;" it becomes them not, it is abomination in the sight of God all that which they do, though glorious before men; and at last day they shall rise up to everlasting contempt; and it is said, (Is. lxvi. *ult.*,) "Their worm shall never die, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh," though they may carry it out fair for a time. The fairest professors, that, by their sorceries and enchantments, deceive the people, shall be filled with shame; and as the magicians were smitten with sores, they could not stand before Moses, (being smitten with sores,) so you shall not be able to stand before the Lord at the last day; and look, as it is with Christ and his people, their cross and shame here, it is but their preparation to their crown; and hence, when Christ was put to the most open shame, then was the daybreak of his glory; so all that you glory in, which God gives, it is but a solemn preparation for your shame; and hence, when Nebuchadnezzar is at his highest pitch and thoughts of glory, then is his downfall. If a man should have a crown upon his head, all honor given him, and it should be whispered to him, This is but a preparation to your execution, what little glory could he take in that? but rather fall a-weeping, as Paul, (Phil. iii. 18, 19,) when he saw some "that made belly their god, and boasted of

the things of the earth, whose glory is their shame;" and he speaks of them weeping; and therefore you that can sit in chimney corner, when you meet with your companions, hang, draw, and quarter within yourselves, and censure all churches, ministers, and Christians of a town and country, and if you see any sores, like flies, go and suck them, and make them worse; or if not, you can make them and imagine them, and scoff at holiness secretly; and though your consciences condemn you of wickedness, yet lift up yourselves with something that you have; O, know it, your beauty. Never a man but glorieth in something: so much estate, so much esteem, so much wisdom, and gifts, birth, and beauty; and now as proud as Satan, but yet a stranger to the life of God, your conversation is not above. O, poor creature, happy were it for thee if thou wert no man, (dying so,) but the most despised of all God's creatures, who art now abhorred of God, and shalt be the shame of all creatures another day.

Section VI.

Use 4. Hence, if any hath lost his glory and esteem in the consciences of the people of God, see how to recover it; the country is full of complaints and murmuring; among the rest this is one of the sorest that many complain of, they are not respected, they are nobody; they had this and that esteem; now the market is fallen here, and hence offended at every one, and can not pass for members in many churches, and hereupon bear a private grudge against the church, and all ordinances in it, and flee towns, or sit still, and comfort themselves, their conscience is clear, etc. It is with many as it is with Bristow stones, they are like pearls, and so they go till they come to the jewelers; and then when tried not worth twopence; so many men never came to the trial, as here God's providences try some men more than ever losses, sorrows: God's ordinances try men, and thus they are found too light; would you now recover it? O, get a spirit of holiness, and think, O, I have had an esteem of, and acquaintance with, the Lord Jesus, that the glory of the Lord is not to this day risen upon me; O, then, make after, and merchandise for this. Prov. iii. 14–16. Sometimes a godly man loseth this; is there not inwardly a decay of holiness? and hence God hath forsaken, and suffered to fall into some sin, so as man hath seen it; do you think the Lord will honor you in the hearts of his people, while you dishonor him? when you live in a vain, dead-hearted condition, and disguise yourselves, or in impenitency for open offences, either of opinion or practice; "Be it far from

me," saith the Lord; (1 Sam. ii. 30;) "they that dishonor me shall be lightly esteemed;" and hence God will cut off Eli's children. You know what a sad letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians; but when they saw the spiritual meaning, (2 Cor. vii. 14, 15,) Paul boasts of them; Titus his affection was abundant towards them; if not abundant confession and glory to God, how should you look that God should else give glory to you? It is wonderful to see how men that have been convinced of sin, and yet would hide it, how the Lord in his jealousy hath discovered them in his time; the sin hath been committed by them, and inquiry hath been made, and some conviction, and yet they have wound off, and cried out of wrong; the Lord hath left them to worse evils; and so the Lord will deal with men; and so I say, Hide your sin, it shall be your shame at last, and the Lord will never honor you in the consciences of his people till you out with it, and confess it. Jannes and Jambres, their madness shall be known at last. I speak not this that men should make holiness a bridge to their own honor, and so to stand upon Christ's shoulders, but that this is the way to regain such a blessing, which a humble heart knows how to want, as well as to have.

Use 5. O, then, place your glory in this; of all things in the world, a man desires nothing more than honor; it is dearer than life, and it is that which every one doth desire. O beloved, hunt not after shadows, feed not your hearts with dreams; make not your garlands of withered flowers, but in this which is your glory before God and men. Jer. ix. 24. "Let not rich men glory in riches, but in this, that he knoweth me." It was the heavy complaint the Lord took up against his people, (Jer. ii. 11,) "that they did change their glory;" the Lord himself is the glory of his people, as shining in them by his Spirit; it was the great sin of the Gentiles, (Rom. i. 23,) "that they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image of corruptible men and beasts;" so you know this is your glory; and O, now, to change this glory for an image of glory! and hence given up to vile affections, to a corruptible mind; and therefore, (Prov. viii. 4, 8,) "Exalt her, she shall promote thee;" admire at this! A man excels in nothing but what he admires at, or seeks not to excel in any thing but what he wonders at; you will never place your glory in holiness, nor excel in it, unless you admire at it; and it will then exalt you, and bring you to honor, because, indeed, it is your honor. O that God would work this! men would not be so greedy after the world, nor praise of men.

Section VII.

Quest. But how shall we come to this?

Ans. 1. Consider the example of Christ, and all the people of Christ at all times, who did not place their glory in these things, but in things above: if a man is to lay much out upon something in the market, if he be wise he will inquire of prudent men that know things, the worth of them, and then it falls out sometimes those things he esteems highly are of no value; so here, look upon Paul, (Gal. vi. 14,) "God forbid I should glory in any thing but the cross of Christ." 1 Cor. iv. 13. When the Corinthians were puffed up with greatness, to pull them down from this, he professeth he and others were the offscouring of the world, and this was their glory. Ver. 16. Look upon Christ himself; he had as much excellency as could be, yet he cast it off, "despised all the glory of the world, was a worm and no man;" he professeth "he sought no honor of men, but the will of Him that sent him;" this was his glory.

2. Look upon the excellency of your estate in Christ; (1 Cor. iii. 21,) "Glory not in men, for all things are yours;" take any prince that hath a kingdom, will he house in a cottage, or spend his time and care to thatch and repair that? no, all the kingdom is mine; and hence he will have kingly thoughts and kingly aims, and ends, and acts that ennoble him indeed. So he, (2 Cor. v. 9,) "knowing we have a house above," that there is but a breath between us and glory, "we labor (are ambitious) that whether absent or present to be accepted of him." The very reason why the hearts, minds, lives of men are so debased, as to seek their glory in that which is their shame, is this, they know no better estate, no greater glory; the God of glory, and kingdom of glory, and promise of glory, and ark, and cherubims, and oracles of glory in Christ have been to this day hid from their eyes; hence, (Heb. xii. 2,) "Christ for the joy set before him despised the shame."

3. Make the Lord present with you, and see him shine about you in his glory; when poor men come to the court and see no king there, they bow down to his chair; where if he was seen, he should have all the honor then; so when men see creatures, but see them like empty chairs, the God of glory not filling of them, we bow down to creatures; but when God is seen, now the soul gives all glory to him; a man that lives without any in his house as chief, all servants attend on him; but when the prince comes with his train, now all his servants with himself are too little to attend the prince; so here, when men come to

pray, or preach, or speak, O, how doth a wicked heart seek itself! but when the Lord is seen, now all attend on him; hence, when God sends his people to honor him, he first appears to them in his glory, and it never is long out of their minds; hence Abraham forsook his own country, (Acts vii.,) Moses forsook Egypt, he saw God invisible. Heb. xi. 26, 27; Ps. xxii. *ult.*, "All nations shall remember and turn to the Lord;" when the Lord is seen, all our glory is shame, (Is. vi.,) and now glory in that, and make him as present as at the last day, then all shall fall down before him.

4. See how every service you perform unto him, every act of holiness quickened by the Spirit of life, is pleasing to him; if a prince be with a man, and can not be pleased, nothing can content him; or we hear not one word from him whether we please him or not, we shall grow weary of him at last; but to consider this, "he that serves me, him will my Father honor; that every cup of cold water shall have a disciple's reward; that every groan shall be heard; that what you do to one of these little ones, you do it to Christ," and Christ takes it as kindly as done to himself; that "the Lord remembers the love of your espousals, (Jer. ii.,) when you follow him in a land not sown, that the comfort of all your labors, tears, sufferings, shall follow you to heaven, and forever lodge in that blessed breast of thine. O brethren, saith Paul, "always abound, and spend your time here, knowing your labor is not in vain in the Lord;" why do men seek to please men, and place their glory there? because men see and approve them: O, what is this to the approbation of a God?

Section VIII.

O, then, preserve this your glory; when men have any thing in the world that is their glory, their crown, their treasure, O, they will keep that especially; rather lose life than lose their names and glory in the world. O, preserve the spirit of holiness, especially in these places; this hath been, this only shall be our glory; and that not in name, and yet dead, but in deed and in power we have had our Christian conversation, and that not by contenting ourselves with a little, but to be exactly holy; a little spot is soon seen in your coat; you shall observe it.

1. When the Jews shall be made the glory of all the earth, their glory shall not consist then in immediate revelations, but in sanctification; there shall be holiness and sanctification; there shall be holiness on pots and horse bridles.

2. When the Lord will be a defence to his people, and a shadow

from heat, and from the sun; it shall be when the Lord hath purged away the filth of men by a spirit of burning; not which burns up all holiness, but filthiness and self-confidence in any holiness, and hypocrisy, and so they shall be holy. Is. iv. 3, 4.

8. How many men stumble by opinions, divisions, etc., (the fruits of a corrupt head, and steams of a dunghill heart,) that had rather live in sorrows among enemies, than divisions among friends! O, the spirit of people, as soon as any new calf is made, fall down and worship it, and break the ancient landmarks which the word hath sent, and then make prognostications of all ill weather to arise from opposing their opinion; never shall our glory be recovered till these evils are confessed and lamented, and the sin of the heart, which begat them.

4. I wondered why so few be converted, (though, blessed be God; some the Lord doth pick out, a few servants, children, and natives;) is it not because either this exemplary holiness, which is our glory, is not, or not so shining, but our lamps are dim? Ministers preach, and hearers are troubled, but they then look upon scandals and offences from others, and so are beaten off again. Zech. viii. 20–23. O, therefore, preserve it.

5. How will all the world abhor the ways we walk in, if we miscarry!

6. God will have holy churches; he is refining the whole world now for that end, and will do so more and more, and go on.

Section IX.

Quest. How shall we preserve it?

Ans. 1. Take heed of harboring an ill opinion of holiness; for then if your judgments dislike it, your tongues and your lives shall disgrace it. Take heed of imagining that, first, there is no grace in saints, only immediate actings of the spirit; this is no Spirit of holiness, no more than in Balaam's ass, through which God spake to him.

Secondly. That these graces are only common; who will seek much after that, or esteem that which is but common? this is to despise the Spirit, to contemn the blood of the covenant, whereby the church is sanctified.

Thirdly. That grace is so dark and obscure a thing always, as no evidence can be had by it, though it be peculiar grace: this is a high degree of disgrace to the Spirit of grace; if one should say, here is a man, but believes not his testimony, it is doubtful and very questionable whatever he saith: it is a dishonor to him, take heed of this. When the Spirit of holiness comes to us in

form, it comes thus, with little peace; but when in power, with much assurance. 1 Thess. i. 5. It is a sad thing, if that which was the complaint of the prophet shall be the complaint of the Spirit, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

2. Take heed of decaying in a spirit of bounty and love, and in largeness of heart to all the people of God, nay, to all men, so far as you have time and strength; let a man be never so great a prince, if he once lose his bounty, he loseth his glory; so here. Is. lviii. 8. "Give bread to the hungry, then shall thy light break out of obscurity." Many complain that New England hath so little love, non-members are not visited, not regarded, (though many times unjustly.) O, they thought to see so much love, and care, and pity; but here they may live and never be spoken to, never visited; O, take heed of this; nothing beautifies a Christian in the eyes of others more than such love, (hypocrisy is nought;) O, excel here; visit poor families, sit one half hour and speak to discouraged hearts, show kindness to strangers; such you were: I will warrant God will bless you; this was the glory of Christ, full of grace and truth.

3. Be very careful in receiving in of members into churches; one ill man will be a spot and pollution to all the rest, (Jude 12,) "spots in your feasts;" you know how many come over, how it begins to be pleaded for; what! not baptized, and professors? and yet how many are disfigured! therefore try them well, take heed of thinking elders or churches are strict.

Fourthly. Be much in prayer for the churches. Is. lxii. 7. "Give the Lord no rest till he make Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth;" that is the way; do you see any sins in the country, go and stand in the gap with Moses, and though the Lord offer to do good to you, yet turn him not off so, till he promise to relieve his poor churches also; beg, and this will do it; be much in fasting; it is a shame for us (who are laying the foundations of many generations) not to be much with God in prayer and fasting, and that when in other places there is so much sowing of this seed.

CHAPTER X.

SHOWING THAT COUNTERFEIT GRACE IS NOT LASTING.

Verses 8, 9. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you: but go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

SECTION I.

IN these words is set down the effect which this awakening cry took in the foolish virgins only.

First. They come to feel, and so to complain of the want of oil.

Secondly. They petition the wise, that they would give them of their oil; which latter is amplified in ver. 9, from the answer the wise made unto them.

We shall open the words as we come to observe any thing from them, and begin now with the complaint "our lamps are gone out," or "going out;" it is all one: the wise virgins' lamps did grow dim, but yet their oil was not spent; but there their oil was spent, and hence their lamps were going out.

Observ. 1. That counterfeit and common grace of foolish virgins, after some time of glorious profession, will certainly go out, and be quite spent. It consumes in the using, and shining, and burning. Luke viii. 18, "To him that hath shall be given; but he that hath not, shall be taken from him that which he hath." John v. 2, 6, Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, it withers, then it is taken away, and so it is consumed, and in time burned; and hence "many that are first are in time last," (Matt. ix. 20,) "and many that are last, first:" men that have been most forward decay, life decays, and these are last; and last are first; many newly brought home to Christ excel them, and live so, and die so, that one would think should never hold out. I need not speak more, Scripture is so abundant: I say, it is after some time of profession; for at first it rather grows than decays and withers; but afterwards they have enough of it, it withers and dies. And look as it is with some bodies when they are healthful, they grow by all means; but when once nature is spent, and now declining, nothing recovers them, though they may be kept at a stay for a time, but die they will with their best cordials in their mouths; so it is here.

For explication of this point, we are to attend how and why this is thus; and that not in the worst, but in the best of the foolish virgins.

First. The Spirit of God comes upon many hypocrites in abundant and plentiful measure of awakening grace; I say it comes upon them as it did upon Balaam. Numb. xxiv. 2. And as it is in overflowing waters, which spread far, and grow very deep, and fill many empty places, they fall upon the ground, they come not from any spring within the ground; and hence, though they last not always, yet they last some good time: so it is here; the grace and Spirit of God comes suddenly and plentifully upon many a man, which gives them a time of flourishing; it comes not from imitation, or education, or moral persuasion only, but physically from the Spirit of God; (1 Sam. x. 12,) when they wondered that Saul was among the prophets, one answered, "Who is their father?" who gave them this gift of prophecy? is it not the Lord? so the same Lord is rich to Saul also. And I say, it is only awakening grace; for renewing grace, savingly to change their nature, is not given, but awakening grace, which works upon conscience, and conscience upon the whole man; and thus it was here with these virgins, they had wonderful light, and a spirit of illumination to see the Lord Jesus, and hence to look for him with much affection and forwardness, as well as the wise, and to keep them company in church fellowship, and though they were secure, to complain of their decays, and desire the Spirit of grace, which they saw in the wise.

Secondly. Though it doth come upon them thus, yet it doth never rest within so as to dwell there, to take up an eternal mansion for himself, (Is. xi. 10;) "his rest shall be glorious." Is. lvii. 15. This is a favor the Lord shows only to the contrite above all people in the world besides. Rom. viii. 11, "If the Spirit which raised up Jesus Christ from the dead dwell in you, it shall quicken you, and seal you up to be sons," as it is there expressed.

Thirdly. Hence it doth decay by little and little; as a man that dwells not, but sojourneth for a little time in a house, he removes by little and little, till at last he is quite gone; as ponds filled with rain water, which comes upon them, not spring water, that riseth within them, it dries up by little and little until quite dry; as it is with light, after the sun is declining and setting, it decreaseth little and little, until it be turned unto darkness; so it is here; and as it was in the cherubims where the glory of God was, and the Lord departed by little and little; as in Saul, first he neglects the command of the Lord in one thing, then in another, then the "Spirit of God departed, and an evil spirit of sadness came upon him;" and then he threatens David, then

kills the priests of the Lord, then goes to a witch, and at last kills himself; and I say this is because the Lord dwells not there; and hence (John xv.) because the branch is not ingrafted into the stock; and this is usually at the very hight of affection and profession; as the stony ground sprang up, when did it wither? when it came to its hight; as flowers that come to wither when they are come to their hight of growth; and hence also men when they have most and best means, and affect and love them, yet then they die and wither. And it decays by four means: —

Section II.

First. Through want of daily nourishment and supply from the Lord Jesus; for look as it is with many bodies, suppose they have life, yet if there be not daily nourishment for it, and wholesome also, it will die ere long, and consume; so it is here; there is a kind of life which hypocrites have from Christ, and it may be fed, and so they live for a time: but this the Lord never doth for them; they are not always fed, and hence die, as it is John vi.; some were quickened to follow after Christ in the wilderness for loaves, some for better ends, (as his disciples,) but the Lord knew their want; "labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which gives everlasting life," which Christ will give you; and hence the whole chapter is spent upon this, to feed upon himself, whence the best were offended: let a man partake of all ordinances, privileges, he shall find nothing else but decay, unless the Lord be in them all to give daily nourishment, (Eph. iv. 16;) daily, I mean, as there is decrease of that taste they have had of the Lord.

Secondly. Through the emptiness of a form; for when the Spirit of God dwells not, but only comes upon a man, it is not long but it corrupts into a form ever after; a man at first knows many truths, and at first is affected with them; he doth not presently forget them, or shut his eyes against them, but after he hath known them a little while, at last the sweetness of that knowledge is lost; and so he hath a form of knowledge, like lessons which a man hath been much affected with, but having plied or heard them oft, he hears and knows them, but is not affected with them. Ezek. xxxiii. *ult.* So at first a man doth many duties with delight; stay a while, and he keeps the duty, but the delight is gone in it, and so hath an empty form; now where the power of godliness and the eternal life of Christ is not, it degenerates firstly usually into this form, and this is all that is left; and the form being empty, hence, first, a man comes to

loathe the truth and profession of the ways of God, which once he loved, and so in time to fall and decay without as well as within; as drink or milk at first are sweet, but stay a while and (the spirits not preserving themselves) then it grows dead, and sour, and sapless; and so it is here. Capernaumites at first be affected, then they fall to a form, then hard to be wrought upon, their hearts fat under all means. "If thy light be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Thirdly. Through the power of lust; for where the Lord dwells not, there sin reigns, and it will get head where it hath had any affront. and so choke the power of all means; and hence a man withers, as in the thorny ground, it grew and choked the word.

Fourthly. Through the fitness of external temptation, which must and will prevail, when the Lord is not within to keep the palace; it is stronger than all common graces in the world, and will draw away the heart and life, (Rev. iii. 10;) there is an hour of temptation which tries men, which will discover men indeed; now, those temptations are ever suitable to places and persons.

Section III.

First. Sometime the temptation is extreme want, as it was with the Israelites, when they were under the oppressions of Pharaoh; O, to sacrifice to the Lord in a wilderness, and to enjoy the land of Canaan, where they should have ordinances; O, they are much taken with this; and many prayers and groans to be delivered out of their oppressions; but when they came to the wilderness, and there did want bread, and then water, now they murmur; which murmuring God remembers, and casts them off for. Had they not Moses, and the cloud, and God's promise and experience? why did they complain? O, to bear want they could not; extreme want is like extreme sickness; it makes all sweet things bitter; some wants men can bear, but not extremity; this saddle doth pinch so hard: so the young man: "Forsake all for me," saith Christ, but he could not; God and creatures are enough, but not God alone; so it is with many a man, he can be content to lose something, but when brought very low, cares and fears grow up and choke all.

Secondly. Sometimes the want of spiritual supply; a man looked for much from the ordinances, and finds it not; not because the Lord's heart is straitened, but because theirs are not enlarged; and hence they have enough of God, and all his ordinances; they have had the heart of them, and now let them lie fallow; (Zech. xi.) my soul loathed them, and theirs me.

Thirdly. Sometimes abundance of outward blessings, peace, liberty, plenty here; now these things, like ground in summer, it is strange to see what lusty weeds now there be, that did appear dead in time of winter. Deut. viii. 11. O, then take heed thou forget not the Lord thy God; now proud and secure, and forsake all.

Fourthly. Sometimes persecution from men; if hot and total ruin be threatened, this scares from God.

Fifthly. Sometimes corrupt teachers and delusions among them.

Sixthly. Increase of iniquity in good and bad, and the place where men live; hence love waxeth cold: all which are Matt. xxiv.

I will name no more, but thus men's common grace comes to wither and die in them; and the reasons are these: —

Section IV.

Use 1. Hence do not trust men too far, nor boast of any man too much, especially in regard of his glorious profession and affections at the first; God sends divers of his faithful servants to a place, and many at first hearing are wrought upon, battered down, convinced, mourning after peace, going to ministers, delight in ordinances; now many ministers bless God for their conversion, and many a Christian is put out of doubt of it, parents of their children, and children of their parents, one brother of another, and one Christian neighbor of another; whom he got out once to hear, and once hearing overcame; and for a time there is no other: O, take heed of boasting too much; it may be they may and will fall (before they have lived many years) down, when at their hight: what man was ever sought unto more than John? all Judea came unto him, yet at last they forsake him, rejoiced but a season in that light; they went also from him to Christ, (John vii. 26, 32,) yet John complains, none received his testimony; Christ himself preached in Capernaum, and never such exalting a man, they boasted in him; yet only a few babes which the Lord wrought upon: the Galatians would lose their eyes for Paul, yet afterward they slight him, and join with false teachers against him. O, therefore, pray for them, and weep for them, but do not trust them too far; neither trust yourselves too much; (Job viii. 31,) "Then are ye my disciples if you continue;" Demas forsakes Paul; all in Asia forsake me.

SECTION V.

Use 2. Hence be not offended if we see many apostatize, and fall from their most eminent profession; the Lord hath here foretold, that after some profession their lamps will go out; we do not wonder if ponds full in winter are dry in summer, because it is the time and season of it, and they want springs to feed them; and never was there any time since the world began that there was such apostasies as now.

First. One man, after much profession, intends to follow the Lord, conscience is troubled at human inventions; O, saith he, if delivered, well enough, though I lose never so much: well, he lays out all, and is delivered; but that which quiets conscience doth not quiet his heart and affections; but his very loss for conscience makes his lusts and desires after other things break out more eagerly, and men can not now live upon gospel only, with bread and water; no, no, you are deceived; as it is with sick men, they let go all their estate for their recovery; but when recovered, they must get up their estate again, this will not satisfy: and thus some fall spiritually.

Secondly. Others, they sought for much in ordinances, but finding not what they looked for, ordinances are but as pictures, fair afar off; but when men come near them, word, and fellowship, and people of God, then they despise them, because they find not a living God there.

Thirdly. While God keeps men under sad temptations, wants, and afflictions; O, then they are humble, and pray; but when blessed with ease, and peace, and plenty, and honor, then how lofty and secure! this is better than the Lord. Never such a decay of the spirit of prayer; never was there such a confusion in the world, such burning of cities, slaying of men, rents of churches, God minding to stain the pride of all glory; and yet never such hearts.

Object. But to stand so long, and yet to fall, seems strange.

Ans. If soon, it is a wonder; but if long, it is no wonder: if once past growing, you do not wonder if an oak be now decaying.

Object. But they keep their profession still only in one thing vile, the error is only in their minds, a spirit of dissension from the people of God.

Ans. Scarce shall you see one man in a hundred that is vile in every thing, that falls totally; the foolish virgins did not so, yet their oil was spent, and their lamps going out; there was a man that was slain suddenly, and his blood in his face was fresh, his

beauty glorious, and many weeks continued without putrefaction, yet life within was gone; so it is the condition of many a man by one wound or sin; and hence a physician at Wittenberg writes of the cause of it, be not therefore offended at them, but wonder at the Lord that he keeps thee. I know there are decaying saints, but they recover again here.

Section VI.

Use 3. O, therefore, labor for the grace that may last, the bread that may last to everlasting life; in all bargains and buildings men will have a special eye to that which will last; if it be rotten, let whosoever will, take it; and be sure it is so; for when God doth fully awaken you, you will see it is not right; the foolish virgins, they thought they were well before; but now after some time, and awakened, they see it will not hold or continue. For the Lord's sake be suspicious here; fear lest a promise being left, any fall short of it; other things will not last, neither creatures, nor the Lord to do you good, unless you have everlasting grace. It is a time the Lord is stripping the world of all ornaments, your wives, children, churches; God will take your husbands, parents, members, ministers, from you; yet, if a heart to close with the Lord, O, this is right.

Quest. How?

Ans. 1. Take heed of any affection, without first subduing the contrary lust; for if you mingle them, the one will choke the other: this is sowing among thorns. Jer. iv. 3, 4.

2. Maintain it upon an everlasting root: if the Lord gives you grace, and you set it in your own garden, it will die; no, let it receive life from the promise, that unchangeable love, and grace, and faithfulness; say, if that supports not, I fall, (1 Sam. xxiii. 5; Is. xlvi.;) to gray hairs I will carry thee; (Ps. xxii. 2, 3,) the Lord leads to waters, he feeds. But I decay; yet he restores my soul. O, but he afflicts much; yet his rod and his staff comfort me: I shall dwell in the house of God forever. Be more empty as the Lord fills you. But O, the sin of this world; all the creatures in the world can not content, but grace doth, and hence men regard not the Lord; and hence you perish, and your grace shall perish also.

CHAPTER XI.

UNREGENERATE PERSONS MAY HAVE A SENSE OF THEIR WANT OF GRACE.

Our Lamps are out.

Section I.

Observ. 2. That foolish virgins, or unregenerate persons, may see and so complain of an utter want of all saving grace.

Look but upon this pattern; they thought they were rich, and had something, but now they see they have nothing; and hence when they search their lives, our lamps are out; when they search their hearts, is there any grace, or Spirit of Christ, or Christ by his Spirit there? No, our oil is spent, and hence, "Give us your oil;" they saw nothing now. The same persons that are sometimes so puffed up, they think they are rich and stand in need of nothing, may be basely dejected, and so feel a want of all things.

Quest. How may this appear?

Ans. First. Because this is no more than what the devils have; if this be sanctification, to see, I have no sanctification; if this be humility, to see, I have no humility; if this be cleanness, to see, I have nothing but uncleanness; the devils then are sanctified and cleansed; who as they are unclean spirits, and accursed of God, and set apart to all evil and sin, and bound up in the chains of darkness, so they know it; they believe the word, and they know they have no Christ, no grace, no love of God, never shall see mercy, comfort, etc., and tremble at this, "with whom there is nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment."

Secondly. Because this is no more than what the law may bring a man unto; "For by the law" (Rom. iii. 20) "is the knowledge of sin;" i. e., not only of gross sins, but also of secret sins; for conscience, which is in every man's heart, will discover the first; men that live under the law see more; and hence Paul speaks of himself, "so far forth as under the law." Rom. vii. 7–11. Now, that which may be wrought in a man merely by the law may be wrought in a man under the law; a man under the law is under the reign of the law, which is to convince of pollution universal, and so to curse; "The law is not the ministration of life to any man," (2 Cor. iii. 7; Gal. iii. 24,) and if the law may convince of sin thus, this sight of sin and vileness is no part of eternal life, and therefore foolish virgins may well

come thus far; and this will especially be found among them, where there is a searching ministry, that there is scarce any close conveyance but the word discovers them. Gehazi can not carry it so closely, nor Ananias so cunningly, but Elisha and Peter will find it out; (Heb. iv. 12,) "The word is quick, and powerful, and searcheth," which is but a common work; and hence, when Peter had told Simon Magus, "Thou art in the gall of bitterness," he denieth it not, but saith, "O, pray for me;" indeed, if the word discovers the strongholds and high forts, and secret lusts and imaginations, and beats them down, and so brings the soul in subjection to Christ, and into captivity, that is it which is the power of the gospel, and love of Christ peculiar to his people's works; but to let a man see he hath nothing but filth, and to be a little affected with it, this is no more than that which is wrought in a deceitful hearer. Jam. i. 23, 24. The law or word lets a graceless heart (a forgetful hearer) see himself; and what can it truly discover to him but his vileness? this glass will discover their smallest spots; this sun will let you see motes; you know and see, and that is all.

Thirdly. Because this is no more than the awakening of sleepy conscience, which the worst man and closest hypocrite may in time have. Cain's conscience, while it is secure, thinks his offering as good as his brother's, but when awakened, now, "My sin is greater than I can bear." Saul goes on persecuting David, and thinks God will help, and hence (1 Sam. xxviii. 5) goes to Urim, etc.; but God answers him not: now he sees his condition, and makes a doleful complaint of it, that God was departed, and no answer. This is usual; (Ps. ix. 20,) "Put them in fear, O God, that they may know themselves to be but men;" weak, sinful, vile men. When the Lord sets up his judgment seat in a man's conscience, not only gross evils, but the secrets of all hearts, all men's hypocrisies, are then opened to themselves, as at last day to all the world; and hence as hypocrites' consciences shall be broken open at the last day, so now also in this life they may see their profession to be but paint. Hence (Is. xxxiii. 14) hypocrites are afraid when God appears in anger; "O, who shall dwell with God?" They are sometimes so confounded with the holiness of God, and the terror of God from thence against sin, that, Who shall dwell with God? are there any in the world that can stand before him? now, all is paint and vile before him.

Fourthly. Because hypocrites may have experience of a great change wrought in them, which decaying and corrupting, they may sensibly find a want of what once they had, which, though they thought it had been saving grace, or that which would

commend them to God, now they see they have no grace at all; hence all are left as these virgins. If a man never was rich, he can not be sensible of being a bankrupt, a beggar. Look, as it was with Adam, he was in a happy estate, in the image of God; now, when lost, he saw himself naked, and was ashamed; and was this saving grace? No; so, though hypocrites attain not to that righteousness, yet they may attain to many spiritual excellencies which they may prize exceedingly, as those that commend them before God and men; but these corrupting, they may now easily see their nakedness, and vileness, and want of all. Saul had the Spirit of God, we know, but, (1 Sam. xvi. 14,) "An evil spirit came, and God's Spirit departed;" did not Saul know this? The having of God's Spirit made him more sensible of the evil spirit; so it is with many a man; the Spirit of God doth depart, and he can not pray, nor prophesy, nor speak, nor think, nor do as he did; nay, he may find an evil spirit upon him; and is this unknown? may not foolish virgins know this? as Samson, when shaved.

Fifthly. Because that which is sometimes a just judgment of God upon a carnal heart, that they may see and feel; but many times (I say not always, because the Lord doth use this to prepare for mercy) it is so that men that have despised grace and Christ, men that have colored it over with God, and thought highly of themselves for what they had, they shall see all their profession is but paint, and all their gold tin and copper; (John viii. 21,) "You shall seek me, and shall not find me, but shall die in your sins;" seeking ever presupposeth a want of me, and if of me, of all life, of all grace, of all comfort and good; and this loss the Lord makes a punishment, which they shall bring upon themselves by contempt of him.

Section II.

Use 1. Hence we may see the woful condition of those, viz. *First.* Consider how far from eternal life those are that never knew their fall. The foolish virgins knew their want of oil and shining, and yet were shut out; how great is their fall, then, and how great their misery, that have had burning lamps, but now know it not! This is the state of many a professor, many a man who is fallen from the Lord, and the affections once he had, but he knows it not; God did enlighten him, but now he is blinding of him; he did affect him, but now he is benumbing of him; he did make him tender, but now he is making his heart fat; he did make him low in his own eyes, (as Saul, but, when a king,

then puffed up,) so God is swelling of him; but this is most grievous, he knows it not. Is. vi. If a man did know his lamp were going out, he might seek, as these, for it, and possibly find it; but now no hope unless the Lord help; as we see men wounded and falling, they are astonished at the blow, that they know it not, and may die, unless those about them dress them, and send to and fro for help to them; so it is with many, men are so stupefied with some blows of their lusts, unless Christian friends exhort, admonish, and send their prayers and tears to heaven to the Lord, no hope of recovery again, and whether the Lord will be entreated is hard to say; surely it is rare; and yet thus it is (1 John v.) sometimes, if it be not a sin unto death; but in a brother, grace will fetch help; but if the man never had grace, and now fell without feeling, there is little hope. If a man can feel no sun rising upon him, nor yet how the day goes away, whether the sun be setting or no, it argues miserable carelessness or miserable blindness, and that the man is in darkness; so here.

Secondly. What will become of them that were never cast down so low as these, that never came to be so good as hypocrites?

For, 1. You were born and have lived not only in a sinful state, but in a Christless estate; dead without all life, every part of thee polluted.

2. If the Lord doth draw any out of this estate, he will make you know what poor creatures you are, that you shall say, I thought I had been thus and thus, but I see I am wretched; I thought I should be saved, but now I am condemned, so that your mouth shall be stopped, (Rom. iii. 21,) else you would never come to the Lord, to your Father's house, and prize the grace of God, if any husks to live upon now.

3. You never knew this; never came to complain to any Christian, O, my oil is spent, my lamp is out; Christ and Spirit, and all good, is gone; no, you think yourselves rich, and want nothing; you have some knowledge, restraint of good affections, and full of these. "The Lord will spew you out of his mouth," if it is thus with you. Nay, although you have means and hear of it, yet all the world can not make you know your nakedness, misery, sin, and emptiness. Well, if the Lord doth not set up a judgment seat now, you shall be called before it one day, and then your secrets shall be made manifest before all the world; and because you say you see, "therefore your sin remains;" (Jer. ix. 41,) so say I to you. You never did contemn God, nor hate God, etc., therefore your contempt remains: if it be, there

Christ will discover it, and so remove it; but is it not so? therefore your sin remains.

Section III.

Use 2. Hence see the deceit of that sinful opinion, that true sanctification is to see I have no sanctification; and cleanness of heart to see nothing but uncleanness; and that this poverty of spirit, to see no grace in a man's self, nor no Christ there; and this not only hath been, but it seems is scattered still; which, as it is pleasing to many a graceless heart, and suitable to his lust, so it carries a fair cloak of humility and self-denial in it, and makes way for such an evidence which the Scripture did never yet declare.

Poverty of spirit is a grace peculiar to them that shall have the kingdom of heaven; but to see no grace is common to those that shall be shut out of the kingdom of heaven; none but those that are justified can be savingly sanctified; many that shall be condemned may see, do see, that they have no sanctification. And therefore this is no sanctification.

1. If this be poverty of spirit to see no grace, then common grace is special grace, peculiar to the elect, as true poverty is.

2. Then it is a grace of the Spirit of God to maintain an untruth, and to give the Holy Ghost the lie; for where there is poverty, there is grace and Christ.

3. Then the grace of poverty of spirit should be quite contrary to the Spirit of grace, "which makes us know the things given us of God;" but this poverty of spirit makes us not to know them at all.

Yet many will possess this true poverty of spirit, and this is true sanctification indeed.

First. It is true, where there was never any of the grace of Christ, but men have run upon reformation without Christ, and affection, etc., there men are bound to see their black feet, and happy is the heart that can pull off every feather from such crests; but where it is, and the Lord hath given evidence thereby according to his word, now to deny it is devilish; for it was he that said, "Job did not serve God for nought," and is a lie, of which he was the father; and is great unthankfulness to the Spirit for what he hath done.

Secondly. If there be no grace in a Christian, nor Spirit, but all in Christ, then say it upon the house tops, and be not ashamed of it; men must see nothing, because they have nothing; otherwise let this delusion rot, and never find acceptance in holy

hearts; and yet how many still describe a hypocrite by all the graces of the Spirit, faith, receiving Christ as King, Priest, and Prophet, etc., and so are clean. creatures and upright men, by seeing nothing in themselves contrary to Christ! (John xiii.,) "You are clean, but not all."

Thirdly. It is true, a gracious heart is apt to deny all the Lord hath done for him; yet the Lord likes not this, as Calvin thinks Peter did, Lord, hands and feet, and all. No, saith the Lord, thou art clean in head, and all but thy feet; and hence needs no washing but in that. And what more frequent than this sin? but to make what is sinful a duty, this is to turn day into night, and night into day, to call evil good, and bitter sweet.

Section IV.

Quest. 1. But doth not the Lord bring every man to see nothing in himself?

Ans. Yes, that the Lord doth in preparing him for Christ, or in drawing him toward Christ; but it is where there is nothing, neither poverty or any other grace.

Quest. 2. But is not this poverty of spirit, or do not those that are poor in spirit see nothing?

Ans. 1. In regard of that unregenerate part, which the longer they live, the more they feel the evil of it, and so the more poor they grow; they see no good there, and so account themselves the most miserable men, mourning more under it than ever; yet see no good at all in themselves; this, if their eyes be open, they are not to say, "I delight in the law in the inner man;" and hence a regenerate Christian is vile in his own eyes after all duties and enlargements, he sees how all is defiled with a filthy heart, and hence, (Prov. xxx. 4,) "I am brutish;" and he speaks of his natural estate, and in that part, for else it is cross to 1 Cor. ii. 10.

2. They see nothing in themselves to commend them to God in point of justification; here all Paul's past and present righteousness is accounted dung.

Quest. 3. If a hypocrite sees and feels nothing, and those that are poor in spirit do so, what is the difference?

Ans. The differences are many. 1. He that is truly poor sees so much vileness, as that he loathes himself. Ezek. vi. But the hypocrite, if he hath any excellency, remains full of it, proud with it: if it be gone, he seeks himself again, and loathes not himself.

2. True poverty of spirit drives a man out of himself, and all

carnal contents, as well as graces, to mercy, to live there, and cleave there, as in the prodigal; he did not only see a want, but feel a need of bread; I die without it. Ps. xl. 9, 10. But another, that sees no good, either is not driven out of his contents, but when he sees nothing, as Cain, builds cities, or if he sees some good in himself, then he is not driven out of himself.

Section V.

Use 3. Hence see which is the surest and safest way of evidencing our good estate; for here men now are perplexed; either it is by seeing no grace, and so expecting the witness of the Spirit, or by seeing some saving work of grace, and so looking to the witness of the word, and waiting for the confirmation of the Spirit; for seals do but confirm the promise and covenant. If it be by seeing no grace, then either by seeing no grace, without having the being of it, and now wait for a revelation, and then it is a delusion; for he is under the condemnation of the word, and therefore far from consolation of the Spirit; or by seeing no grace without seeing the being of it. If so, then a man must seek for a witness of the Spirit, without understanding the meaning of the Spirit, or of the witness of it; and so a man must shut his eyes against part of the truth, that he may see another part; a man must see that he is beloved, but not thou believer, or thou called, art loved or justified. O, then, take heed of this way of evidence, or else by now seeing grace, and waiting for a witness; now this is safest, for whenever the witness comes, it is certainly right now, not a delusion; hereby we shall see the full meaning of the witness and compass of the Lord's love. And therefore take heed of denying all grace, and seeing nothing, and then wait for a revelation, and if it comes now it is right; no such matter, you may see nothing, and to hell, and no consolation to them that see nothing; think not that this is poverty; it may be a seal to a blank, to such a one as the Lord never intended mercy unto; that which God promiseth pray for, (Zech. xiii. *ult.*,) first, to say, It is my people, and then, The Lord is my God; find that the Lord makes you his people, and then say so. Let all know this is never questioned, whether the Spirit be the cause of witness, and clearing our estate; but whether by seeing nothing or showing something; here is the mystery of it. O that God would make you hear, that are called away from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ! These foolish virgins were wiser than many nowadays in this particular: they cried for oil in their lamps, or they knew they could not be accepted of the bridegroom.

O, search and try yourselves thoroughly; for you come in time to see all your paint fall off, all your guilt discovered, etc.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE DESIRE OF GRACE THAT MAY BE IN HYPOCRITES.

Give us of your oil, etc.

SECTION I.

Observ. 1. That foolish virgins may, and seriously do, desire not only salvation, but grace itself. For these virgins did not only desire the Lord to open to them, but "give us of your oil;" and this they do not desire in show, but seriously; for they felt a want of it. Our lamps are out, our oil is spent, our misery is great; O, now, help us with your grace. This may appear in these particulars:—

First. They may feel a loss and a want of it, and having some hope in this life to gain it, hence may seek it. Thus not only the virgins, but Simon Magus, (Acts viii. 24,) when he was convinced he was in the gall of bitterness, he doth not only content himself with his own, but doth commend himself to the desires of the church and apostles; "O, pray for me, that none of these things may come upon me," but that I may be brought into another estate, whereby I may escape all this; (Amos viii. 11, 12,) "I will bring a famine, not of bread, but of hearing the word;" i. e., you shall feel a woful want of that, and of the consolation, life, and spirit of that, and you shall go from sea to sea to find, and shall not. O that I had taken my time! will the careless ones say.

Secondly. They may have a high opinion of it, and see a marvelous excellency in it, and hence may be drawn to desire it; (John vi. 33, 34,) "My Father gives you bread from heaven, which Moses gave not, and such bread as gives life unto the world; then said they, Lord, ever give us of this bread;" and yet they were carnal, and desires carnal, arising from the sight of the excellency of it; that scribe, (Matt. xii. 33, 34,) "To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart is better than burnt-offerings and sacrifices;" O, that is admirable; the ordinances are good, and creatures are good, but this is better. As a man when he admires the world, he ever desires the world, though he never hath it, so here, as in Balaam. Not only word and Spirit

may commend it, and so they may desire it, but the excellency of it in the lives of the saints will commend it: so as carnal hearts may desire the company and love of such men above all in the world; (Rev. iii. 8; Gen. xxvi. 28,) "We saw God was with thee, and that thou wert blessed of the Lord;" and hence there are some desires after it. 2 Pet. ii. 19. Men escape pollutions by Christ.

Thirdly. They have a taste of the sweetness of it, and hence may desire it. Heb. vi. John was a burning light, and they rejoiced in him, and all Jerusalem and Judea flocked to his ministry, and came into the wilderness after him; the savor of the grace of Christ may wonderfully draw desires after it, they may find such a sweetness in it; (Luke xiii. 26,) "Many shall say, Lord, have not we eat and drank in thy presence?" that is, they find much sweetness there; the Lord taught among them; they desired him, and thought he was their own, yet shut out; and hence, (ver. 24,) "Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Fourthly. They may and do grow up in a glorious profession in the ways of grace, and such a profession as to stand it out against persecution, as the thorny ground did, and may have some growth toward it, which can not be without some desires and springings of heart after it.

Section II.

Use 1. Hence let this be an item to all the people of God, to preserve with all care, and not to lose, but to make much of the Spirit of grace inherent in them; for look as the Lord Jesus, when he would make his disciples wonder at their blessedness, and make much of him, and his love, saith he, "Many kings and prophets have desired to see these days, and have not seen them;" so many professors of great parts and gifts shall desire to have that Spirit of grace and peace which you have, and shall never see it, never shall have it. When David's heart began to be drawn away by the evils of the world, and then beheld the vanity of that, his desires are now turned another way; "O, it is good for me to draw nigh to God," that is good. As if he had said, Though it be good to have the things themselves, yet it is not good for me to draw too nigh in my desires and esteem of them; but "good for me to draw nigh to him." It may be sometimes your hearts are taken off from esteeming your condition, and what the Lord hath done for you; and hence no desire after the Lord or his grace, but the lawful comforts of the world; not

inordinately; but if I had so much, or as good as others, then well. Ps. cxli. 4, David entreats the Lord not to incline his heart after any evil thing, no, not after the wicked's good things; "Let me not eat of their dainties;" for grant that thou losest all these things which others have, the time will come when the greatest prince, and those that have their desires filled here, shall say, O that I was in that man's estate! Let the Lord, therefore, exercise you with many wants and sorrows; remember this, your end will be peace, which the worst would give a world for another day.

Use 2. What then will become of them that never desired grace at all, because they are well enough without it? a man can not live (say they) by praying and hearing of sermons; such duties are troublesome; hinderances, not desirable helps; and when any ordinance comes, when will Sabbath be ended? and as for the people of God themselves, they can see no difference between them and other men, nay, they think them worse; if this be your religion, God keep me from your religion. Nay, they can see no beauty in Christ to desire him; they can desire that they were not kept in so much on the Sabbaths, nor so much pains taken with them to instruct them; it may be these may desire that their hands be kept from stealing, their tongues from cursing, and their feet from running to shed blood; but the life of grace, and power of it, they desire not that, nor never did: I remember when David was in extremity, "Lord," saith he, "my groanings are not hid from thee;" this was his comfort when he could not pray, (Ps. iii. 8, 9;) but here it is otherwise. Canst thou, if extremity should come upon thee, say, Now I am not able to speak, O, remember my closet tears, my midnight groans, and daylight complaints, and those daily sighings after thee which have arisen from this sorrowful heart? Did the Lord never work this in thee? If extremity comes, and thou hast no such thing to witness for thee, do you think that you shall meet the bridegroom in peace? O, no! go home, and make thy moan over thy own soul; the Lord is far from me; if "many seek to enter, and shall never be able," what will become of me?

Use 3. Hence see how many people deceive themselves in their evidencing of a good estate, who, because they see no oil in their vessel, nor see no shining in their lives, yet because they desire it, they think hereupon the Lord accepts them and their desires, and therefore the Lord will fulfill them; this very conceit keeps thousands in their sins and miseries, and that under conviction of them; yet I desire it were better with me; and they think hypocrites make shows of this and that, yet they have

unfeigned desires; and here thousands rest, and this slays them; (Prov. xxi. 25,) "The desire of the sluggard kills him."

Section III.

Quest. But doth not the Lord respect the groanings of his people? doth not Christ say, (John iv. 10,) "If thou hadst asked," etc.? doth not the Lord look upon the inner man, the very frame, nay, desires that have been past?

Ans. Yes, there be some desires which are evidences; some which are not; I shall discover them that be unsound in the particular example of the foolish virgins, etc.

First. Those are unsound desires which arise in the soul easily, without feeling a need of the Lord's almighty power and Spirit of life to work them at first; we shall find that the desires of regenerate Christians do not come easily, but they find a need of the Lord to draw them (Jer. xxxi. 10; Lam. v. 21;) but the desires of others spring up easily and quickly; as these foolish virgins, they wanted oil, they could quickly desire it; and they go to their fellow-brethren for help, "O, give us of your oil." Look as it is with wild rye and pease, they will come up at the season of the year in abundance, without sowing or plowing; the ground bears them naturally; but other corn and grain will not come so easily; your ground will not bear it till plowed and digged, and then the hand of man must set it, and die it must, before it can live again; so here, if desires come and spring up easily, it is a sign they are wild; the Lord must break the heart, and then sow these, and plant these from heaven, and you must fetch it out of heaven, else it is nought; for when the Lord works saving desires indeed, he ever sows them in a broken heart, which is thoroughly broken indeed; when God sets the smoking flax on fire (which are desires) he first bruiseth the reed itself.

Secondly. The subject in which these desires are; a man hath a son and a servant; the son hath all his desires granted him, because he hath a sonly spirit: all the father hath is for him, that may be good for him; a servant desires importunately, but he prays from the spirit of a servant, and all that his master hath is not for him; and therefore if he pray for the inheritance or a part of it, of the portion of the son, shall he have it? no, he shall have what is fit for a servant: so it is here; the Lord hath some sons in his churches; these praying and desiring from a sonlike spirit, all that God hath being theirs, they shall have it; and hence, (Ps. cxlv. 18–20,) "He will fulfill the desires

of them that fear him, and love him, and delight themselves in him;" for that is the sonlike disposition; when he is cut short of all comforts in the world, nay, when he may have his fill of them, yet he delights in his father's face, love, and grace, and fellowship, and house; (Pg. xxvii. 4,) "For they are heirs and co-heirs with Christ, being sons:" but now there are servants in the house of God; shall they have their wills and lusts? no; thus it was with these foolish virgins; they were only servants in the house, no true spouse or sons, and were foolish at best, and had not the spirits of sons, but had their lusts; never were espoused savingly to the Lord Jesus himself, nor laid up all their hope in him, but were foolish; and that is the ground why others' desires are heard, not theirs.

Thirdly. Unsound desires make after a certain measure only, whereas the desires of saints seek after this grace without measure; and thus the foolish virgins fell short of the wise; all that they could get was little enough for themselves; but the foolish look after some of their oil, as many a man looks upon the gifts and parts of another; O, saith he, if I was as such a one! and many a man sets up such a measure, and if he hath that, is well, while he wants that miserably: look wistly upon the foolish virgins; they did content themselves with a measure, and now they are in want of it, seek for it; at first a little did content them, and now when it is spent, a little will serve them again: and what is their measure?

1. So much as will beautify and adorn them before men; "Our lamp is out."

2. So much as will comfort them against the coming of Christ; for now they were troubled that their oil was spent, whereby they might meet the bridegroom: he that desires it for a little measure of it, his desires are certainly unsound; so much as will serve his turn, (he cut his coat according to his cloth;) but he that desires it without measure, *e contra*, as Paul, (Phil. iii. 12,) "That I may apprehend, by any means, that for which I am apprehended;" as Chrysostom calls Paul that *insatiabilis Dei cultor;* for he makes it his last end; as he that desires wealth without measure, though he gets not all the wealth of the world, yet the more he hath, the more he craves; this his fleshly lust is his last end.

Object. But he may desire it without measure for his own ends.

Ans. I confess it is true; for men may desire honor, and no honor but by gifts, and no gifts but by grace; and hence may desire infinitely, but yet it is but a measure, viz., to serve his own

ends, but not the Lord's ends; to set up himself; true desire of grace is for that which may pull down self, and make God all. Ps. cxix. 4, 5.

Fourthly. It is not their only desire, or the only thing they desire, viz., the good Spirit of the Lord, and that they might not live or any thing else in them, but that the Lord may live, and his grace and kingdom may prevail in their hearts; the desires of saints are only after this; or if their desires are after other things, the Spirit lusts against them. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. As carnal desires are after life, and the comforts of it, so spiritual desires are after the life of Christ in them, and the comforts of the Lord thereby; (Ps. xxvii. 3, 4,) "One thing I have desired, and that I will seek for;" what was it? a crown, a kingdom? no, "but that I may dwell in the Lord's house forever, and visit his temple." Notable is that example of Abraham. Heb. xi. Two things he met with that might draw down his desires.

1. He came to a land which God promised to give him, where he lives among enemies, and in fears.

2. He might have returned to another country, and now have been better.

3. God blessed him, etc., but it was nothing he desired, only another above; hence God is not ashamed to be called his God; but the foolish virgins fell short of this, and hence they now seek only in times of extremity: and this is the frame of many graceless hearts in time of extremity. 1. When all grace is gone. 2. When death is come, then they seek earnestly after the Lord, and grace; O, their sin lies heavy! O, then a humble heart is sweet: but before their hearts were overcome with lusts after other things; and this double heart every carnal heart hath, (Eph. ii. 3,) "fulfilling the lusts of the mind," i. e., diabolical lusts, "and lusts of the flesh," i. e., sensual and beastly lusts; it is the state of all men; and hence promises are not made simply to men seeking the Lord, for they may miss, but to them that do it with their whole heart, (Ps. cx. 2; Jer. xxix. 13,) this they never do; and hence men pray daily, and live in their lusting all the day after; men long in misery, but are cool in peace.

Section IV.

Quest. But seeing there are in saints two natures, flesh lusting against the spirit, and spirit against flesh, and a double heart in a reprobate, whereby he desires grace and other things, how shall we distinguish them?

Ans. 1. The lusts after grace and worldly things in a hypo-

crite agree together in the same heart; but those lusts which are after the spirit in a regenerate heart are contrary one to another, and like fire and water, one seeking to destroy the whole being of the other. *Ex. gr.* A man wants the things of this world, he seeks and desires after them, riches, honor, rest, and peace; but thinks he, If I had no more but this, I may to hell, if no grace; hence he desires that, and so doing now he hath peace, and all is quiet with him, and goes on sweetly in a way of profession and prayer; and a gracious heart is ready thus to do, and to make his head lie soft with two pillows; but yet the Spirit riseth up against this, that the soul thinks, I shall fall by this heart; Lord, how apt to rest in these lees! lusts in hypocrites are like brethren, that help one another to this end, to get peace; but here as enemies, to destroy such a cursed peace as that is in the godly.

2. In a false heart, lusts and desires after these things are dear to them; like their limbs and best members, they can not be nor can not do without them; but in saints they are sores and blains, and so hated of them. *Ex. gr.* Let a man have a full table, and a fair estate, and outward blessings, promising much, and the ordinances of God, and a heart to follow God there; now see him lively in the service of God; but let him be brought to extremities, and want of all this, and fears of poverty, estate wasteth, poverty appears, many rents come in, and the wife cries out; now he falls down to the earth in discontent or worldliness, and his life and affection to ordinances, or the servants of God, is now gone; as it is with a bird, when she hath two wings she can fly, but when she hath only one, then she falls, and the fowler takes her, because it was a limb precious to her; so here. Thus it was with David's servants at Ziklag; (1 Sam. xxx. 4,) "all wept till they could weep no more;" but here it was otherwise with David, he could fly to God without those wings; so when God gives a man a condition not so great as he would, and the heart lusts after so much, and God crosseth; he can not be content with a little or a mean estate, because his lust is his limb, he can not suffer it to be cut off, or be pared; if a man hath a wooden leg, he can cut it answerable to his shoe, but if but a limb, he must have his shoe cut answerable to his leg, because it is his limb, no cutting of that less: O, it is dear. So it is with a man that hath a lust after any thing: it is dear, and hence he is said to live in them, and to be in the flesh; but the desires after these things in a gracious heart, they are blains, they can be without them; O, never such a happiness if the Lord would dead them to me; (Gal. v. 24,) "They that are in

Christ have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof."

3. The lusts and desires in a false heart are reigning lusts, and make the lusts after grace and holiness serve them, but e *contra* in a holy heart. *Ex. gr.* A man prays for the love of God, and the Spirit of grace; and it is affectionate, but yet it is ever for some lust; (Jam. iv. 3,) a man desires grace to perfect his gifts, and gifts to deck him, and purchase him honor before men; a man desires grace to quiet his conscience in assurance of God's love, and pardon of sin, that he may live the more peaceably with his sin. Is. lviii. 3, 4. Now, in a gracious heart, the desires of these things serve the desires after grace; for he desires the things of this world to be the more holy; (Prov. xxx. 7, 8,) "Feed me with food convenient, that I may not tempt thee;" he desires, and hath them for Israel's sake. 2 Sam. v. 12. Like a tradesman, he buys and sells, but it is for gain. Phil. i. 20. O, consider of these things, and if your hearts have had only such false desires as these, know it, that as verily as these virgins were shut out, so shall you another day.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DESIRES AND ENDEAVORS OF HYPOCRITES AFTER GRACE ARE NOT LASTING.

Section I.

Observ. 4. That foolish virgins, in their first endeavors after the Spirit of grace, usually cease from seeking farther, before they have got that measure and fullness of it which will continue to the last. Or, —

That there is ever a cessation in the first endeavors of carnal professors from seeking after that measure of grace, which will indeed last and continue until their meeting with, and appearing before, the Lord Jesus Christ.

For these virgins here did seek the Lord Jesus and Spirit, and hence did get that measure which lighted their lamps for a good season; and they contented themselves with this, and gave over seeking until it is too late; and therefore now they say, "Give us of your oil; our lamps are out." These foolish virgins, when they had got somewhat, they are carried with abundance of affection and profession; they think themselves as good as the best, and what need they seek for more? and then grow secure and

fall asleep until all is spent. The Scripture is pregnant every where for this. But let us look and see the causes of this.

First. Sometime it is because they know not what that measure is which doth accompany salvation; but they set up an imagination of their own heads, which is a false image of saving grace, and when they have that, now they think all is well, and they go no farther. Judg. ii. 11, 12. People that know not the Lord, nor the power of his grace, "will set up other gods, and serve them," and there rest; until it is with them as it was with those, when the "anger of the Lord waxeth hot, and spoilers come;" now they cry unto the Lord. What is the reason why many a man falls short of the righteousness which is of God, viz., of faith? Because he sets up in his head a righteousness of his own; and if I get that, then I hope the Lord will accept me, and forgive me; and hence, (Rom. ix. 31, 32,) why did they miss of it? Because they sought it by a righteousness which is of their own: so why do many miss of faith? because they think it is an assurance; or when a man rests upon Christ, not considering the need of an almighty power; and hence the apostle prays for this. Eph. i. 19. So for repentance, why do men fall short of it? they think it is when God's anger is expressed, the soul then comes to seek the Lord, and finds some comfort, (Ps. lxxviii.; Matt. iii.,) and so runs away with it. So for holiness, they think it is to be like others; and then well; they think these are the men that shall live, and are happy; and look as it is like it was at Babel, when head and tongues were confounded, one calls for a brick, the other brings him a trowel, hammer, or tile, because he did but imagine what he spake, and so understood not his language: so it is here; men read and hear God speak, and ministers call for faith, and knowledge of God; but earthly minds can not understand heavenly language; and hence they imagine that is faith and repentance which indeed is not, and so miss of that which indeed else would continue; and this is the misery of many thousands, that in seeing see not. The experience of the work of grace makes men savingly to know what grace is. John v. 37, 38. Now, men graceless never felt it in the life and power of it, and therefore can not tell it.

Secondly. From the nature of common grace; the nature of which is, as the apostle speaks of lifeless knowledge, (1 Cor. viii. 1,) "to puff up;" it never leaves the soul more sensible of his vileness, as saving grace doth, (Ezek. xvi. *ult.*,) and so makes a man never rest in seeking after the Lord; but makes the soul feel himself full, and hence the stomach is gone from seeking

after more, as, (Rev. iii. 17,) "She thought she was rich," etc. The Spirit of grace which is but common, that heals a vile, proud heart, it easeth him, it quiets him, in healing some sin which lies sore on the conscience; it heals and quiets the man, so he is well, needs no repentance; but the Spirit of life indeed destroyeth the man, and slays corruption, and hence he resists; and now saith the soul, I never felt my heart so vile as now: and hence saith Paul, "Sin revived, and led me captive: O wretched man!" as it is with a prince, if any great ones come and serve him, he likes them; this gives him rest, settles him in his throne; but if any one come to reign over him, now he gathers all his strength to oppose. So common grace it ever comes as a servant to corrupt; and hence take a man of best wit and parts, he turns them against the Lord, and makes them serve himself.

Thirdly. From an apprehension of this difficulty, and an unwillingness in the heart to break through the difficulty of seeking after the Lord; many a man sees (as Dives, in hell, "Abraham afar off") grace, and God, and Christ afar off; but there is a great gulf between them and grace; now to be watching, fasting, seeking the Lord diligently, to follow the Lord hard, (Ps. lxiii.;) to keep the heart lamenting till the Lord comes, this is hard; as (Heb. iii.) it is said, "They could not enter in because of unbelief." 1. They thought they could never overcome. 2. They thought the Lord did therefore hate them. Deut. i. 27. They did not regard the strength of God; "they shall be but bread for us," saith Caleb, (Numb. xiv. 9;) they could not believe that to be bread that is so hazardful. So it is with many a man, and hence he sits down with desires and hopes, and so perisheth; "the sluggard's desires slay him;" hence many complain of difficulty, but never break difficulties, and so perish; and so not like to the merchant that goes far for pearl. It is his business, and no storms nor ill weather drive him to desire the smoke of his chimney till he hath got them he hath now resolved to venture all for; (Prov. ii. 5,) "If thou dig for silver," etc. Many prize Christ and grace; O that I had it! but are loth to dig for it, they love their ease so well, and hence rest in their desire after it; but indeed miss it; and hence many can come to and follow God in outward ordinances, but never find fruit and comfort in any of them, because of difficulty, yet sit down content because they seek for ordinances; as, (Prov. xii. 27,) "The sluggard roasts not what he had took in hunting;" there is a very great delight in coming to ordinances, as travelers under the shadow; but then to climb the tree, that is hard, and hence lose the fruit, and hence

God, seeing a man love his sloth, and hath that base esteem of his grace, as that he will not follow so hard after it as he hath done after his lusts, lets loose Satan, and he comes and stakes down a sinner in this, God must do all, and there he rests, and so he falls short; like one that comes to husbandmen, and tells them they have taken much pains and care to get their ground good to bring forth much, but for time to come their ground shall bring forth fruit without planting or sowing, only reap you the fruit; it would be good news to them, and they believe it, and then when the year comes about, they are to seek for corn; so this affects, and here they rest, and by this means want.

Fourthly. From feeling the unprofitableness of seeking the Lord through difficulties, and hence they give over but a little before they find that that will continue.

1. Some follow the Lord for carnal ends, as Judas did; but he finding the purse grow lank, and the bag empty, he forsakes the Lord.

2. Some for comfort, and hence pray and mourn; and hence, (Mal. iii. 14,) what profit is there that we have walked so? as it was with Naomi, when she returned home, both her daughters accompany her some part of her way; "Return again," saith she, "to your friends; here is no husband for you where I go:" the one would not be beaten off; It is not a husband I came for, but a God; "Thy God shall be my God:" the other, hearing her speeches, and loving her father's house, and country, goes back, not without some affection; so it is here; whereas faith will cry the more.

Fifthly. From the offences which usually Satan casts in when they are in the heat of their first endeavors; as the stony ground, being offended, fell away. As,—

1. Persecution, and hence they fall; a child begins to look towards God; the father, mother, friends scoff and reproach.

2. Corrupt teachers, (Matt. xxiv.,) that like false Christs deceive, and put a world of scruples into men's heads, and then lead them away; as the Galatians that would pull out their eyes for Paul, yet by love and smooth carriage of false teachers so plausible, they fell off strangely.

3. Corrupt company, women or men; many strong men have fallen by the one, and "men also who having a form of godliness, yet denying the power of it," their hearts are taken in these snares.

4. Some hard point of doctrine, (John vi. 60, 66,) something is preached that is cross to our apprehensions; I will never believe it, say they, and away they fall.

Sixthly. Because of false comforts, which usually men meet with before they get that which will abide in them, in their worst hours; and this quiets all.

1. From themselves; a man sees Christ only can redeem him by price, but he feels no need of Christ to redeem him by power; and now seeing what a miserable creature he is, stays himself upon the Lord, and that it may be by some word which he hears; (John viii. 30, 31,) "when they heard that, they believed;" yet the Lord tells them they are not free, but were yet captive to their sin, which they need the Son himself to die to save them from; and so many a one comforts himself, and stays here, though he have no other assurance.

2. The approbation and comfort of others. Ezek. xiii. 3, 4.

3. Strange ecstasies of joy which many a man meets with suddenly; they have eaten and drunk in Christ's presence, and have been comforted at such and such a time in such a manner; this, we shall find it, persuades men that God is theirs without revealing the subject, viz., We are his people, and that change which God hath made.

Section II.

Quest. What is that measure which will last, and throughout continue?

Ans. I have spoken of this at large; but he that loves the truth as his daily bread will feed upon it whenever it is set before him. Now, there is one thing, (this is different,) and I shall express myself in one thing only, viz., they give over before they have tasted and drunk the satisfying sweetness of the grace of Christ, and the presence of his grace in their souls. That, look, as it was with Israel, they came out of Egypt, and saw the wonders of God in the wilderness, and had his fiery law and glorious tabernacle among them, yet they never came to the land of rest; so it is at this day with many: they have some glimpses of the excellency of Christ, and his grace, and some desires after it, and some tastes of it; they are pulled out of their woful bondage, and seeing words of God are oft affected, yet their carcasses must fall in the wilderness, because they never come to rest; they fall off from God because they never knew what this rest meaneth. Heb. iv. 11.

Hypocrites have awakening grace, and are much troubled; they have enlightening grace, and know more than many Christians; they have affecting grace, and are wonderfully taken with the glad tidings of the gospel; but satisfying grace, or that grace

which brings them to full rest, and satisfying sweetness in God, not only to their consciences, but to their hearts, not carnal, but spiritual, this they never came to. John iv. 14, "He that drinks the water I give shall never thirst again." John vi. 54, "If ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, there is life;" if not, no life. Eating and drinking is not sipping and tasting; many may eat and drink in his presence, as those Exod. xxiv. 11, but yet not feed at all on his person. This makes the soul glad in God, and in all the days of his life. Where any creature is at rest, there it is in the proper place. It is a token the Lord is the proper place of the soul (not sin, nor hell, which was Judas's proper place) when it is at rest there; and this is the last end and fruit of the redemption of Christ, (Jer. xxxi. 11, 14,) i. e., not having so much of God as to be a God-glutted Christian, (as he said,) but so satiate as not to desire other things, but there to stay, though the heart doth oft not feel the same sweetness.

Section III.

Now, there are four things which do concur to this fullness of satisfying sweetness:—

First. Manifestation of the Lord Jesus in his full proportion, and in all the dimensions of his goodness to the soul. The soul of man is made for, and so desires, an infinite, eternal good. Whiles this good is not known to be such a one, it never satisfies; and hence let a man look upon any one creature, there is much sweetness in it, but not all; hence it satisfies not. There is sweetness in honor and wealth, but if sick, a miserable man; there is sweetness in health, but if poor and naked, a desolate man; and if one creature had all in it, yet when one thinks, This must be taken from me, it is like Jonah's gourd, it never satisfies.

Now, the grace which satisfies much first manifests the fullness of infinite goodness suitable to me in the Lord; if that, now do I want any outward blessing? it is in Christ, for he is heir not only of heaven, but of all the world.

2. Do I want spiritual blessings? Eph. iii. There is all in him, life, and peace, and glory.

3. Have I nothing to move the Lord to do any of these to me? yet there is fullness of tender mercy and pity in him. Eph. i. 17, and iii. 18.

Secondly. Possession of this good as mine. Let a poor man see heaps of gold before him, it satisfies not him, because it is none of his; let a Christian hear of kingdoms, peace, glory, in

and with Christ, yet it satisfies not him; it troubles him the more, if Christ forsake him, and grow strange to him; but to be sure that Christ is mine, this makes the soul do, nay, suffer the utmost for Christ, and to know that nothing can separate, etc., as a man that knows he shall kill, and not lose his life, will venture like Samson upon a host of men; they may wound me, they can not bind nor slay me. Rom. viii. *ult.* There is joy and some satisfaction in finding the pearl of great price; what joy when it is possessed!

Thirdly. Communication of this good to the soul. Let a man have meat and drink, but he can not come at it when he hath need of it, will this satisfy if it be locked up? let a man have real possession of never so many lands, yet if he hath not the benefit sure to him, as well as the thing, he will never hold out; what am I the better? so that grace satisfies that brings the soul to fruition of the good, that it is now in respect of the benefit of it conveyed to the soul; (Ps. xvi. 4, 5,) "The Lord is the portion of my lot and cup," and he maintains both; and hence, (Jer. xiv. 9,) "Why art thou like a man astonished, yet in the midst of us?" If a man have meat and clothes, and the one never feeds, the other never warms, would this satisfy? No, unless that he may feel them, nay, he would think this a curse; so let saints have God in his ordinances, the best in the world there is, if not fed thereby, Lord, what a misery is this! especially if the Lord helps not in time of need.

Fourthly. Reflection of good again to the good which doth refresh us, else it never satisfies. If a man have meat dealt out, and it is very sweet, yet if it gives him no strength to perform acts of life; if a man have a friend, and he can not love again, nor show testimony of love, it will not satisfy him; so that grace satisfies which makes the soul reflect the love of God to God again; "Shall I serve the Lord, said David, of that which cost me nothing?" You know the vine and olive (Judg. ix.) were quieted by this, "That they did rejoice the heart of God and man;" what do you tell me of bonds? "I account not my life dear to finish my course," saith Paul.

Now, a carnal heart gives over before he sees, or possesseth, or enjoyeth the Lord, or found the sweetness of a holy life in walking with God. Hence,—

1. He loathes and is weary of all his profession and truth he knows, and the God he talks of.

2. Hence they break out to some lusts or others; which, because if not satisfied here, they must satisfy themselves some other way, either in vain conceits or opinions, or lusts of the world.

3. Hence desperate doubts, Is the Lord mine? whereas, if it were otherwise, then as it is with a man, ask him, How do you know you eat and drink? It satisfies me, saith he, it puts strength, I should die daily else.

Section IV.

Use 1. Of examination, instruction, and exhortation to all those who have rest content with that measure of the Spirit which will never last, to begin again, and lay a better foundation, lest it befall you as it did these virgins, or as the sinner in Prov. v. 11–13, "You mourn when you, not your flesh, but soul is consumed. O, how have I despised instruction!" lest wrath break out which can not be quenched, for dealing slightly with God and your own souls: how many Christians take that for grace, which, when it comes to trial, will be found too light; and know it not, and regard it not, till the handwriting of God is upon their consciences!"

If, therefore, you have not found the satisfying sweetness of the Spirit of grace, that water which quencheth all your inordinate thirst, that bread which feeds you to life, be sure your oil will be spent, and your light will go out before you die.

Section V.

Quest. How should I know that satisfying sweetness?

Ans. Ah, methinks you should say, O that I did know it! yet wary I would be of giving any just occasion to break off what the Lord in his grace hath wrought; yet you may know something of it by this.

1. When the Spirit of God's grace dispensed in his ordinances doth glut you, and slay you, and make you worse; here is not the grace of Christ which doth satisfy you, if the more knowledge you have of the truth, the less glory you see in the truth, and the less you love the truth; if the more comfort you have found by it, the less you now desire after it; if the more abilities you have received by it, the more proud you grow, and high-minded; if having come for to seek the ordinances of God, the less good you find by them, the more weary you grow of them, and the more you despise them; it is certain, the satisfying grace of Christ is not here, when the bread to feed is poison to slay: is not this the condition of many? what is the cause they are growing worse, that they are worse in their latter end and middle of their Christian profession, than the beginning,

because they are grown full by God's ordinances, and so worse? what is the cause in places of persecution the Lord's ordinances were precious, not when they come to them? God's ordinances, plenty makes them to undervalue them, through their sin; that look as it is with men in consumptions, whose life is going out, they think they can eat, yet, when it is before them, loathe the smell of it, or a little serves them, whereas another finds it otherwise; not but that saints may think thus, but they with Hezekiah mourn under it, (2 Chron. xxxii.; Hos. vi. 5,) "I have hewn and slain;" what is the cause? "Because your goodness is like a morning dew, which soon vanisheth, therefore have I slain them." O, God loves us, and we are the best people in the world, because we have ordinances; no, but because you be shallow, hence you shall have prophets to slay you.

Secondly. If any man maintains any living lust in himself, in the midst of his profession, and hungers after it, and the life of it; for when a man hath better food to feed upon, he will neglect his own at home, as Christ said to them when they asked him why he did not eat; how many be there which have strange gifts, and have had marvelous ebbings and flowings of the Spirit of life and peace, and yet one sin have they lived in, and would not, could not live without it! Look as it was in the wilderness, they were for a time pretty well content with their allowance and wilderness walks and provisions, but they could not stay long; "They asked meat for their lusts, but he sent leanness into their souls." Ps. cvi. 14, 15. So that there it is, if lust be stirring, the Lord either denies it his own people, because he will starve the lust, that the soul may grow; or, if he gives it, slays the lust by it, gluts it, makes the soul grow weary of it, and prize his first husband more; as Solomon by his experimental discovery of the creature; many men confess and pray against their sins, but by their sorrows and desires, they do maintain the life of their sin, fall to it as the dog to the vomit; you will be cast away at last. 1 Cor. ix. *ult.*, "I beat not the air, lest I become a castaway;" whereas a gracious heart doth not maintain, but waste and consume his lust. His life is to live to God.

Thirdly. If a man's heart and affections reach not the people of God with the dearest embracings, nor yet mourn for the want of such a heart; for sometimes there are some drops of the Lord's goodness falling into the heart, whereby the soul cleaves unto the Lord, and is moved, and ravished, and bears much love, as it thinks, towards him; but look to their love to the people of God, there they fall short; because "the love of Christ is not shed abroad abundantly into their hearts, filling and satisfying

of them;" and hence have none to pour out upon the souls of their neighbors. 1 John iv. 20, 21. In our own country what was the accusation of saints? viz. They are hypocrites before God; what did you think of those men that said so? *Ans.* Surely they were enemies to the Lord, and that never loved him; for then they would love his people. But what is the occasion here? now they say they come for ordinances; but they are unjust oppressors, cruel; poor men may starve before regarded by them; and so they cast reproach not only upon some few, but all the people of God, and church of God; if that it be so, their accusation is God's accusation, if not (as generally it is) for many, though unable to do much, yet if called to it, would lay down their estates and lives for others; then know thou never hadst Christ's love shed in thy heart, (which will continue,) but drops of it only; because thy love can not reach to these. Beloved, what is the end of your coming over hither? is it not to enjoy first Christ? the saints' company is most precious; and do you here bite, and censure, and devour, and neglect, and reproach one another, and upon any conceived injury stumble? are poor men neglected? It is a sad sign the love of Christ is not in power. Heb. vi. 9, 10.

Fourthly. If there have been abundance of sweet affections and sweet refreshings, thereby rising up within the soul, without the death, and killing, and removal of the contrary lusts and sins; it is certain this soul was never truly filled nor satisfied with the Spirit of God's grace; for as it is with vessels, while they are filled with lime or chaff, they can not be filled with wheat or with water, so while the heart is filled with some noisome distempers, it can not be filled or satisfied with the Lord; look but abroad in the churches, how many are there that say and think they hate their sin as the only evil, they close with the Lord Jesus, they love the people of God all of them, they seek the glory of God, and yet they do but think so! for though they hate sin, yet it is unsoundly, because they see not how closely their hands are knit to their sin; they never did believe, because they never felt their unwilling heart to close with Christ; they never loved the saints, because they never felt their contempt of saints; never sought God's glory, because they never mourned under that which did stain it; they never make work with their own hearts; the stony and thorny ground withered, because their soil was naught; a heart filled with sweet affections, which never felt the strength of contrary corruptions lying underneath, it is an ill soil, and where those affections will never prosper, nor prove right; and hence (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21) he that purgeth himself from these

things shall be a vessel of honor, ever preserved, never broken. Do not put it to a venture; it may be I may have grace, and so put your salvation to the hazard of such hopes; but the Lord that comes to thee knocking, open the door that he may come in and feast; cry for infinite creating power and mercy to make haste and come and help thee; what have you to do else but to get your old lusts purged away? What do you labor for else? If you have children to bring up, if you have any love to them, nay, if swine or cattle, meat you will have to feed them, and satisfy them if possible; and yet behold thy soul perishing for want of true spiritual refreshings!

Section VI.

Use 2. Of exhortation to all young beginners, and so to all others; take heed that you chop not at your comfort too soon; take heed you do not perish in the way, that while seeking after the Lord and rest, you fall from the Lord by security and scandal, and so you perish; but labor for that which will continue and last.

1. Mariners when they go a voyage, they will trim their vessel, and search if there be not something amiss which may sink the ship at last; if once out at sea, they may die before they come home; and hence at first setting out are careful; so do you.

2. You will meet with trials enough to exercise all your grace, that you will find all little enough in the issue.

3. This will be your comfort at death, that though it be difficult, yet if you have fought a good fight, and run a good race, there is now a crown; this will make you to go out of the world wondering, and go up to eternity in your chariot, in your triumphant chariot of glory, when you shall see on the one side, here a Demas forsaking, there a Judas betraying; here one Christian withered, there another scandalized and offended; and yet the Lord hath upheld thee, (in thy integrity,) a poor creature, that thoughtest thou shouldst never have held out at all.

That you may do thus, two things are to be done.

First. Be sure your wound at first for sin be deep enough; for all the error in a man's faith and sanctification, it springs from that first error of his humiliation; if a man's humiliation be false, and weak, and little, his faith is light, and his sanctification counterfeit, as may be seen in the stony and thorny soil; if a man's wound be right, and humiliation deep enough, that man's faith is right, and his sanctification is glorious; for Christ can not be exceeding sweet and satisfactory to the soul, unless

sin be at first exceeding bitter; and this is the reason why Christ is not sweet nor precious at first nor afterward, because sin is not so bitter to them, especially heart sins; Christians shall find it, the esteem and price of Christ falls, while sin lies light and is not bitter.

Section VII.

Quest. How bitter must it be?

Ans. So bitter as that nothing contents your heart, while sin is with you, and the Lord is gone from you. Lam. iii. 4, 9. "Mine eye ceaseth not mourning, till the Lord look down from heaven;" as a man that looks for a prince to come and live with him, he prepares rooms for all his attendants, but he reserves the best lodgings for the prince himself, and they are kept empty while he comes; so the soul entertains creatures, and ordinances, and saints of God, but yet the heart is not content, but sits empty, desolate, while the Lord is gone; for while the heart is delighted with somewhat else beside the Lord, (that if the Lord comes, it is well, if not, it is merry and jolly,) see what the Lord there speaks. Jam. iv. 8–10. "Cleanse your hearts, and he will draw nigh unto you;" turn laughter to mourning, else you are not humbled. Let God's own people do so, it stops up the fountain of God's love, and sweetness of mercy. Ps. xxx. 7. "When carnally confident, I was troubled;" as it is in marriage, if a man know there is familiarity between the woman and another lover, he will have none of her; but when sin is thus bitter, the Lord hath the garments of joy to give for the spirit of heaviness. Is. lxii. 1, 2. O, therefore, though it be cross to have limbs cut off, and breasts seared, bones broken, etc., yet part with all for life, even this life of Christ in you, which will give you full content.

Section VIII.

Quest. How shall I do thus? my heart will be wanton and carnal.

Ans. 1. Set this down for a conclusion, I shall never be comforted by the Lord, while any thing else comforts my heart, i. e., for itself, as hath been proved; and if this was well thought of, this would make a man above all other things detest his carnal content, because this indeed keeps the Lord from him.

2. Keep the remembrance of the bitterness of your sin and evil in it; thus David (Ps. li. 3) set it ever before him; for all the sweet of sin comes into the heart by a delusion first begot in the mind, of some present good in it, which the soul not attend-

ing to is drawn away by it; (Jam. i. 14,) "drawn away and enticed;" hence fortify here. Three things in sin, which, if remembered, would make it bitter.

1. Sentence of condemnation passed upon thee by the law of God for it, which may make a soul to mourn. Little content do men take in their prison bolts.

2. The death, and agonies, and sorrows of the Lord Jesus, to acquit the soul from this condemnation; this is that which may work "bitterness as for a first born." Zech. xii. 10, 11.

3. Crossing the will, and so grieving the heart of Christ now in glory, as when the old world grew sensual it grieved God to the heart; keep these in remembrance; what pleasure canst thou take in that which makes the Lord sigh?

4. "The end will be bitterness." Ps. lxxiii. 17.

Secondly. Take heed you miss not of that faith which will bring in supply. Heb. iv. 1, 2. Take heed lest, a promise being left, any fall short of that rest which comes by the promise, by an unbelieving heart; for many desire the Lord, and rest upon the Lord, and they are satisfied with their hunger, and with their rest on him, without receiving life from him; truly you will fall from the Lord then; for if the Lord doth not daily drop life into your hearts, you will grow weary of him; and ordinances, they are empty wells, and promises, they are dry breasts: if you have bread, but it feed you not, you will not care for it.

Section IX.

Quest. How shall I get this faith?

Ans. 1. Honor and advance the Lord's rich grace in thy heart, before thou goest to him for the Spirit of life; thus that poor woman, "If I can but touch his skirt, I shall be whole;" if I can come to him, I shall have help; many can think before they go to Christ, I shall never speed, I shall never overcome these evils; and hence the Israelites are excluded Canaan. Though I know the Lord doth pity his poor people when they believe, though not thus far; as it is with men; if you would get their hearts from them, commend them; so here; and though this doth not move the Lord, yet it is an ordinance; it is a way of God. Mic. vii. 17, 18.

2. Take up a firm resolution never to let thy heart go from seeking the Lord till this is wrought. Ps. xxvii. 4. "This I will seek after;" see that thou must needs have this; and hence do not say, I have desired and gone to the Lord, and no help comes, and now sit down; no, but take advantage hereupon to

desire the more, and to make the Lord's denials or delays the ground of thy cries; as the Canaanitish woman, crums; as Jacob, by wrestling against the angel, he had the blessing at last. Say, as it hath been long, so therefore, Lord, help because of that. But sins are many, and the heart is worse: O, the more need of grace: Moses, (Ex. xxxiii. 18,) "If thou wilt not go with us, carry us not up hence."

3. Wait for the Lord quietly, and look out when will it be better. Is. lxiv. 4. "Eye hath not seen;" and wait for him first; and so for other things. Is. xxx. 18. "Blessed are they that wait for him."

4. If the Lord gives not; yet seek to give him content, though he doth not content thee, as Mary, (John ii.,) when they wanted wine, (1 John iii. 22,) we do what pleaseth him; and hence have our answer; this will fetch it.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOWS THAT THE GRACE OF ONE PERSON WILL NOT ADVANTAGE ANOTHER THAT WANTS GRACE HIMSELF; AND THAT THE BEST CHRISTIANS CAN NOT DISPENSE GRACE TO THOSE THAT WANT IT.

Ver. 9. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

SECTION I.

HEREIN is set down the answer of the wise to the request of the foolish virgins.

This answer of the wise virgins contains two things.

First. A denial, together with the reason of it, which is a check to their folly.

Secondly. Their counsel and advice, directing them to the remedy, if there be any which might supply them with oil: "Go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." The Spirit of grace comes not so lightly by. You would have it given; no, you must buy it; you would have us help you; no, there are others appointed for to sell it you; away to them before the bridegroom comes.

1. "Not so."] They are words inserted in the English text, not so in the original; but yet they are safely put in, partly because they are intended directly in the strength of their reason, and involved therein, implied thereby; partly because they do

more clearly express the meaning of the words, and give their sense more distinctly.

2. "Lest there be not enough for us and for you." What, did the foolish now look to works of supererogation, and prayers of saints, and the treasury of the church's holiness and indulgences? Surely no, for these were virgins, had escaped the pollution of antichrist, and they go for this not to Popish treasurers, but unto them that are wise; neither is it likely that Christ's coming could awaken them out of their security to fall to gross Popery so suddenly, whiles they were the companions and imitators of the wise, and therefore this is not the meaning, as some have wrested the words, and so make the answer of the wise to be a Protestant answer to a Popish petition, and therefore bid them go to shavelings that will for money sell pardons, and indulgences, and prayers, and merits.

Section II.

Quest. What, then, are the wise unwilling to communicate of the graces they have? what Christian but is willing?

Ans. First. We are not to adhere to words in opening parables, but to the scope; now their scope was hereby, first to sink and humble the hearts of the foolish, and to let them know that all that which they had in time of extremity was little enough for themselves at this season.

Secondly. This answer is made answerable to the ground of their request; you know how hypocrites in churches rest in outward privileges, and how they are carried unto ordinances, but not above ordinances indeed to Christ; and though they have some knowledge of, and lookings above them unto Christ, yet missing him, like men sinking, catch hold upon that which is next, and so look for help thence; so these being in the fellowship of the wise, and admirers of them, and having got good by them, and imitated them, hence they rely too much upon them for it; and hence they answer, We have but our measure, and therefore it is not in our hands to dispense grace in times of extremity; that must come from him that hath received the Spirit without measure; so that this answer doth not imply unwillingness to communicate, but to let the others see that they were not the first that could communicate.

Thirdly. You are to consider that God had now broken open the consciences of the foolish, that they professed they had no oil; hereupon the wise virgins are not unwilling to communicate altogether; but considering other means are sanctified to beget

grace where it never was, or rather of greater efficacy and power, hence they send them to other means, to them that fell professing this for their ground, that they had little enough for themselves, and it was not in their power now to convey any. This, I conceive, is the direct scope of the parable in this verse. Hence three notes.

Section III.

Observ. 1. That the grace of God's Spirit in other wise-hearted Christians will do no good to foolish virgins, and slothful Christians, in the days of their extremity; (Ezek. xiv. 20,) "Though Job and Daniel stood before me, they shall but deliver their own souls;" gracious holy men, if not only in misery, but sin, (1 John v. 16,) they shall recover, not others; (Jer. iv. 4,) "Lest my wrath break out like fire." O, therefore, dally not under ordinances; to have them, but no gain of them; to have vines planted, but not to eat fruit of them, and all by reason of a slothful heart, is a dangerous thing; as many a man hath a rich stock, and a good trade, and yet thrives not; O, he is not careful to keep, nor diligent to improve, but is idle; so here.

O, consider the wrath of God! In extremity usually the Lord hears and helps his poor people; but it shall be far from the Lord, when others shall say, Lord, help; no, let others' tears and prayers be regarded; no, what, Lord, not in extremity? no, not in extremity.

Section IV.

Observ. 2. That it is not in the hand of the most eminent Christians to dispense the grace of Christ to whom, and when, and where they will; not in all separably, nor in all jointly; it is not in all the wise virgins' hands together. It is not in the hands of a whole church, or all churches, to do this. These poor foolish virgins, it may be, they did not in their judgments think thus; however in their practice they now trust to this. But these answer, It is not in us.

It is not in Moses to give his spirit to whom he would, but the Lord. Numb. xi. 17.

It is not in Paul nor Apollos, the one deep in wisdom, the other admirable in expression, but in God, who gives the commission to bring the whole world in. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

It is not in Christ, as man, to give to one to sit at his right hand or left.

It is not in the hands of the best parents; it is not in the wills of all men living. John i. 13.

Section V.

Reason 1. Because they have but their measure received wholly and dependent wholly from another, answerable to their own necessities; therefore it is not in their freedom, but in the hands of him who hath received it without measure; (John iii. 34, 35,) "But the Father hath put all things into his hands;" as it is in stars, one star doth not give light to another, but the sun to all, having received it without measure comparatively; so one spring doth not beget another, but it is in the sea, which hath water without measure, from whence they come and return again.

Reason 2. Because all the saints, and all the fellowship of God's people, ~~it is but a means, or they~~ are but the instruments in the hands of Christ to convey grace; now, you know all instruments act and work according to the will of the principal agent, as it is not in the ax's hand to cut down one tree for fuel, another for building; but in the agent's hand, especially if the instruments be weak and powerless, and such are the people of God; (1 Cor. i. 29,) "They are poor things, and weak things, and nothings, things that are not;" (2 Cor. iii. 5,) "Not so much as to think any thing of themselves." It is not in the people of God as it is in salves, that there is an inherent virtue abiding always to heal, and that in any man which is curable; but there is only an adherent virtue which doth not always abide; and when it is there, works not upon all, but only at the pleasure of the principal agent, the Lord Jesus; those means which providence hath put an inherent virtue into can not bless, but as the Lord will; meat can not nourish sometimes, much less can these without the will of another; hence (Eph. iv. 16) the saints are edified by this, but from Christ still.

Reason 3. In regard of the greatness of the power and honor that is required to dispense the grace of God, and the spirit of grace, which the church is not capable of.

First. Knowledge of the elect; the Spirit of grace which accompanies salvation shall never be given to any but to them; (Rom. xi. 7,) "The election have obtained it;" hence they must be known first to them that have power to dispense it; now, that they can not tell; indeed, Paul, by seeing the power put forth, knew the election of the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. i. 4,) but not before; he could not say, This man I will give grace unto, and not to that; a minister, as Paul, (Acts xviii. 10,) may in general know that there are some people, in such a place, at least probably, but who they be he knows not, no more than Samuel, who knew one of Jesse's sons was to be king, but not one whom he

liked, but whom the Lord did choose; and hence a minister calls all, because he knows not who they be: only some are called, because Christ knew, and therefore in his hand it is.

Secondly. The power must be omnipotent, both to lay the foundation, and to go on with the building; now, that can not be put forth, by a poor finite creature, when it will, but when the Lord will; a minister may preach and quicken, a Christian may exhort and comfort, and yet they may meet and hear again twenty times, and never find the like day, because their weapons are only mighty through God. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

Thirdly. Shedding of blood, dying, and bearing wrath, to purchase and so to have the Spirit to send; for the Spirit of grace could never be given, nor increased, nor continued in any, had not blood first purchased this; our sins are said to be healed by blood, and we cleansed from them by it; i. e., by the Spirit purchased by it. Heb. ix. 14, "Blood sprinkled purifies your consciences with blood;" i. e., the virtue of blood applied by the Spirit. If any of the saints shed blood for the church to redeem it, then they have power to convey the Spirit of grace to the church; and it is as hard to convey one drachm of grace as to die.

Section VI.

Use 1. Hence we may see the glory and excellency of the Lord Jesus above all men; nay, above all the best men and best churches living: ask David whom he loves and honors most, he will tell you, (Ps. xv. 4,) "He despiseth a vile person, and honors them that fear the Lord;" and that Christian that is most excellent had all his heart: ask any Christian, to what men his heart is most knit, and whom he doth most of all honor, if he sees one man in forty most holy, most humble, most like to God, most acquainted with God, and the mind of God; a Paul for wisdom, a David for brokenness of spirit, an Abraham for faith, a Stephen for courage and zeal, etc.; their very feet are beautiful, their very names are an alabaster box broken up. And why doth he thus? Because he sees they are holy, and like to God. O, but consider they can not make thee holy, it is not in their liberty; though they should like thee, they can not teach thee one truth savingly; thou hast a rugged heart, they can not polish thee; and wild, they can not tame it; they can not convey one drachm, or taste, or savor of the life of grace to thee. O, if these be lovely who only have oil in their vessels, though they can give none for thee, what is the Lord Jesus then? who is not only holy, fairer than the children of men, having all without measure; but

can also make thee holy, which none of the saints can; who not only is good and holy, but doth good and makes holy? Thou lookest sometimes upon saints, and seest their grace and life, and mournest for want of it, keepest company with them, and wishest thou hadst their oil, but they can not help thee to it. O, look up to the Lord. If thou lovest and prizest them, O, prize and love the Lord much more, who hath it in his hands to give it unto thee; who like a spring sends not forth its streams to refresh itself, but the weary, but the faint, (Is. l. 4;) who, like the sun, sends not its beams out to enlighten itself, but "that those which sit in darkness might see," and blind might know. John ix. 49. John xvii. "For their sakes I sanctify myself:" he hath a humble, meek spirit, to give to thee that art proud and sturdy; he can make a lion a lamb, who hath a wise and heavenly spirit to teach thee that art simple, and thee that art earthly, if his good pleasure will.

Section VII.

Do not say, I have found good from them, as well as seen grace in them, that I blessed God that ever I saw or spake with them, or ever saw their examples, etc. I answer, Know it that they were but powerless instruments in the hands of a merciful, yet powerful Christ, otherwise thou hadst never received good from any Christian, minister, or sermon; the Lord Jesus could as well have used them as means to have condemned thee, as he did Noah's ministry, and Noah's example, by which he condemned the world, as well as to have called thee, or done the least good to thee; therefore this still puts a beauty upon Christ above all others in the world; all the saints and ministers in the world could not have changed one hair from being black to white, nor by all their cares for thee added one cubit to thy stature. O, it was the Lord Jesus: if they have any pity, the Lord put it in them; if ever they spake one word, or made one prayer, the Lord put it in them; if blessed, it is by him.

Now, dost thou honor and love them, because they have done thy soul good, else thou hadst been in hell? O, admire the Lord much more, for they were but set on work by him; and now they have done thee good, there is a stop, they can go no farther, you think; I did receive good by a little, while being with such Christians, but now, when thou comest hither again, thou thinkest (it may be) thou shalt receive much more; no, their hands and feet may be bound, those conduit cocks can not turn themselves. O, but Jesus Christ he can go on, nay, he will go on until he

hath made thee like unto his own self; and hence, (1 John iii. 2,) "Then we shall be like him; now we be sons." Children, though born of poor men, yet love their poor father that begat them. Who gave you your being, who begat you to God, and so made you sons of God? O, methinks the Lord that did this should be precious and lovely; that you should call the world to wonder at it, that the Lord had made an incarnate devil a blessed angel. But thou hast a vile heart still; O, but you shall be like him; he will make you like himself at the last day, who is brighter than angels, and whose face is fairer than the children of men; only he will do it by little and little here, rather by causing thee to feel thy vileness, than removing it wholly.

Therefore, as the apostle, (Gal. iv. 9,) when they were turned from the gospel to Mosaical observances, he calls them "weak and beggarly rudiments," which had no power of themselves to convey grace, nor at best in that abundance which the gospel did; so say I, Do you now know the Lord, who did not once know him? and do you now admire and love Christians and others, if they do good especially to you? and do you refuse to honor the Lord, but look only upon beggarly, weak means and Christians? God forbid; it is the Lord only that can enrich you, etc.

2 Cor. iii., "If the ministration of condemnation was glorious, O, what is the ministration of the Spirit?" if those which have the Spirit be glorious, what is the Lord, that not only hath it, but can also give it, "and make you like unto him in glory, and that by the very beholding of him"? ver. *ult.* If a man had such a glass which not only gave him the sight of some dear friend always, but, as oft as he looked in it, makes him like unto him, how would he prize this glass, but especially the image of his friend in it! So Christ is not only glorious, but he thereby makes himself glorious.

Section VIII.

Object. Do not say the Lord can do this, but he will not; saints would if they could.

Ans. 1. You do not know but that he will do it; when Christ was here on earth, and men were sick, though their friends willed their good, yet I doubt not but Christ was most glorious, because though they knew not that he would, yet they knew that he might, heal and pity, and if it were for his honor he would.

2. Pray to him for it, and do it; "he will pour water on the thirsty, and give the Spirit and water of life to them that ask;" do not think you seek in vain, especially if your cries arose from

a sick heart, that sin is thy disease, not torment only; it is not thy delight, you need a physician, he will not heal you, if it is not your temper, your food, etc. If a man hath a mind to a thing, and another denies him, he will not see less beauty then than he did before; if you have a mind, Christ hath a mind also.

Object. But I do not feel the Lord giving me the Spirit.

Ans. Yet if you prize it, and reach after it, the Lord hath done this for you.

Section IX.

Use 2. To all the servants of the Lord, if ever you did any good to any, O, boast not of yourselves, but carry the glory of it to the Lord Jesus, as he said the Lord doth good by me, but I know no reason why. So add also, But I wonder at the manner how a poor, weak, dead nothing, whose unclean heart and lips might have made others worse, not better, as infection sticking to the best garments. Acts iii. 12, 13, "Why stand ye looking on us? be it known to you, by the name of Jesus it is that which is done;" when Christ was known to heal all diseases, all the country round about, by this fame of him, came to him, and so he healed them; this will bring in customers to Christ. Some Christians are very forward to speak to others, to let in some new notion, or to convert, that they may make an Absalom's pillar afterward, and that they might report, I did this; some take content in speaking of conversion of others, that I did this. "Let your works praise you," but let your tongue praise Christ; it was the Lord that did this. If bread could speak, it would say, It is not I that feed; and fire, Not I that warm: you can speak, tell others so; you would fain be accounted somebody, and therefore will devise new gospels, and mint new notions; not only Christ may be pleased, but men may say, This I received of such a one, that their names might be spoken of. The thief takes the sheep for himself, a good shepherd carries it home to his owner.

Section X.

Use 3. O, then, do not rest in this, that you have now got to partake of the fellowship of God's people; I confess, next to fellowship with God, their fellowship is best and most sweet, (1 John i. 3, 4,) and nothing more powerful to preserve and keep God's people from apostasy than this; (Gal. ii. 7,) order and steadfastness in faith are coupled: they that be planted in the courts of the Lord shall flourish here, nothing increasing grace more, (Gal. ii. 19,) when many eyes to see by, many

hands to help work by: when a man sinned, if one or two men only took up stones to stone the sinner, it may be they might miss, or the man live; but when there be many, it is strange if it doth not kill; so out of fellowship of the people of God, one may admonish, then another, and it may be he can shift; but here there be many, etc. 2 Cor. ii. 7. When a man's life is going away in a swoon, if one or two be there present only, he may never recover; but when one rubs, another chafes, another holds him, another runs and fetches hot water for him, it is a hundred to one but he escapes. But yet as the best means, if neglected or trusted to, will make men worse, as Capernaum was worse for Christ's preaching, which they boasted of, so the best means, if not trusted to, will make men better; as it is with some extracts and spirits, they will make quick work one way or other.

1. If ever you see or receive any good, look to the Lord in them, (1 Sam. x. 11, 12,) who is their Father.

2. If ever you look to receive any, look to the Lord, that by them he may convey help and succor in his time.

Section XI.

Quest. How shall I get that good?

Ans. 1. Feel your need of their fellowship, and their help; you will then be getting good by every example, every prayer; (1 Cor. xii.,) "The eye can not say to the hand, I have no need of thee:" O, be not full; for God hath not made you so full; but if you be an eye, you need not the foot, etc. David knew more than the Levites did, yet how did he long to see God, and the goings of God in the sanctuary!

Paul did need the mutual comfort of Christians; it was a strange thing in Paul when he was to carry money to others; yet he beseecheth them, "O, pray for me." Rom. xv. 30, 31. Do not say only, I feel a need of sacraments or ministry, but I need the prayers, the counsel, the examples, the exhortation of the meanest Christian.

Secondly. Be sure you join yourselves to living Christians; that is, not only such as have grace, but such as are lively in the use and exercise of it; for those God sanctifies, especially to communicate grace to you; if a living hand be knit to a dead arm, sure little good will it receive from it; (Rom. i. 12,) a lively believing Christian will comfort Paul, and a humble Christian will humble.

This is the very reason why Christians do not get good,

because their hearts are dead, and their fellowship with God little; and hence others despise them, and withdraw from them.

Thirdly. Love them dearly; a man will never get good from any Christian that he despiseth, or slighteth; as it is with a man, if his hand would have life from the head, set it in his place, and let not it be tied outwardly, but united as a member, and then it receives it; and hence it edifies itself in love; so by love are men edified.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE PLENTIFUL DISPENSING OF GRACE IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

Section I.

Now follows, secondly, their counsel and advice, "Go to them that sell, and buy," etc. "Them that sell;" some there be that make this an irony, or a plain mock of the foolish virgins for their folly; as if they should say, You have lived like hypocrites hitherto before the Lord among us, and deceived us and your own souls; now you would have our grace to help you; no, get you gone to mass-priests, and pardon-sellers, and merit-mongers, and buy for yourselves; they have merit enough, etc. But this meaning, as it can not be evinced necessarily from the words, so such an answer can not stand with that sad and gracious compassionate spirit which is in every holy virgin; for suppose God should break open the conscience of any in these days, and they opening their hearts to others, they should receive this answer, (Nay, seeing you have neglected your season so long, get you gone to mass-priests, let them help you;) would any of common honesty in like manner mock? much less a gracious heart; no, but if any have a true sense of their misery so sleeping out at their season of grace, their bowels will melt over them.

"Those that sell."] These are the ministers of the Lord Jesus.

For, 1. It is manifest it is not a mock.

And, 2. Those that sell are not ordinary Christians; though they may and do convey the Spirit, yet not in this case so powerfully; and hence they do send them from themselves.

3. They do send them to those means which do most abundantly convey the Spirit: now the word and the Spirit are united, as shall be proved; the chief dispensers of which word are the ministers of the gospel.

4. Because ministers are called such as sell. Prov. xxiii. 23, "Buy the truth and sell it not;" now, where is the truth chiefly sold, but by the prime publishers of it? Mal. ii. 6, 7. Not that the Holy Ghost is to be sold for money; but to buy it there, as it is to be sold without money, which calls all that thirst to come, (Rev. iii. 18,) not that they should fix their eyes upon them, as upon the chiefs to convey it; for the Lord Jesus sells, and we are to buy of him; only these are servants under him, and appointed as an ordinance of his for this end; the apostle conveys his ministry (2 Cor. ii. *ult.*) sincerely and gloriously.

"Buy for yourselves."] That is, seek for it there, though you lay out never so much of your money, your time, and thoughts, and affections, for it, and receive it there when it is offered upon any terms, though you part with all you have, that so you may make it your own, and so have of your own, and so may with comfort meet the Lord; and this suits with the custom of the saints, to send them there where they got theirs.

Section II.

Observ. 3. That the Spirit of grace is principally and most abundantly dispensed in the ministry of the gospel by the ministers thereof; that is, they are those that sell; this is their business, and trade, and work, like the olive tree to the candlestick, (Zech. v. 5, 6,) which take rooting in the courts of God to this end, to drop in their golden oil; but still observe it is as servants under the Lord Jesus, who gives what and when he will by them.

You know the famous expressions of the apostle, "How can they hear unless they have a preacher?" Rom. x. 14.

2 Cor. iii. 7, The gospel is called "the ministration of the Spirit in the mouths of the apostles and their successors, by which it is made more glorious than the law delivered in tables of stone, though less outward glory; for we have it but in earthen vessels."

Gal. iii. 2, "By whom received you the Spirit? by hearing of the law? no, but by the hearing of faith;" thereby is the Spirit revealed and dispensed.

Section III.

Reason 1. Because they are set apart principally by the Lord for this end; for God's separation of any thing for an end, though the thing be unlike to bring that end about, yet by this it

hath a strange power accompanying it; as the brazen serpent, how comes it to heal? It was set apart for that end, and sanctified of God; and hence God, setting apart an ordinance, is present with his ordinance; as Aaron and his sons were sanctified for the service of the tabernacle; and this is done two ways.

First. By the church, according to the will of God, they are set apart from all other employments, unless those which other relations bind them to, that so they may dedicate their time, their strength, their private studies, their selves, their prayers, and tears, and all for them; and this ought to be unless necessity compels. Acts vi. 4. The disciples would give themselves to the word and prayer, and would not be cumbered about the deacon's office. Paul exhorts Timothy to give himself to reading, to think on these things. 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

Secondly. By the Lord himself. Gal. ii. 15, 16. What is true of God separating Paul to an extraordinary, is true in a measure of all his servants set apart for ordinary work. Mal. ii. 7. For the church sometimes may not set a man apart, yet the Lord may and doth; (and hence by these sometimes he sends to call a church before there is a church to call,) and how is such a one set apart? not as an ordinary Christian, but as an extraordinary embassador, as it were in the room of the Lord Jesus himself; for Christ being mediator of his church, two things are required to make peace. 1. To speak to God for us. 2. To speak from God to us. The first he doth by his intercession. But we hear not from him? Yes, for he sets these in his room, and by them he speaks as mediator to our ears and hearts, (2 Cor. v. 20,) so that if Christ was here present to speak, we would look for the Spirit by him and his ministry. Now, all messengers of the Lord Jesus are in the room of the Lord Jesus, etc. Nay, if Christ was here, the Spirit would not come but by this means; and hence Christ converts not so many as the apostles by their ministry within Judea.

Reason 2. Because the Lord hath furnished them with special abilities to dispense the grace of Christ for the church's sake; (2 Cor. iii. 6,) "Christ ascended on high to give gifts for edifying the body;" if a man should have an apprentice set apart to sell, but his shop is not furnished, how could he then sell, and how should men in wisdom expect to buy? I will not speak of what is required to make men able; Christ not only as a free agent sets them apart, but as a wise agent furnisheth them with abilities for that end. There must be that knowledge which may make the man of God wise to salvation from the Scriptures,

which can not be without knowledge of tongues and arts in some competency, and study about both.

1. They can not think a thought; Christ furnisheth them with thoughts; the minister knows not what to say, yet his thoughts are from him.

2. They can not speak; hence (Eph. vi. 19,) the Lord opens their mouth; Ezekiel must be dumb for a time.

3. Have they therefore any knowledge of the mysteries of Christ? It is to teach the church (2 Cor. iv. 5, 6) all their gifts and spiritual abilities, though never so great and peculiarly sanctified, but it is for them, (2 Cor. i. 4, 5,) (and though it is true there are in other Christians Christian abilities to help and comfort others, yet not ministerial in every Christian, — the whole body is not an eye, — nor which hath a special presence of the Spirit of God in it and with it,) which they should never have received but for the necessities of some in the church; there is good to be had by watering-pots, when grass and herbs are dying; but yet sometimes the rain falls, and that hath a peculiar virtue in it, as being fitted for that end; and hence ministers are compared to clouds; and hence men will pray especially when many clouds are, the Lord grant these bottles may drop; so hither you are to look; dish milk and flit milk may convey some nourishment, but breast milk hath spirit going with it; good books may be blessed, but there is not that spirit in them as in lively dispensations of the gospel by ministers themselves.

Reason 3. Because the Lord hath given them hearts enlarged to dispense the gospel, that so the Spirit may be conveyed; "We preach not ourselves, but the Lord Jesus, and ourselves your servants," etc. 2 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 8. If one be appointed and furnished, but hath no mind to sell, they have other trades to follow, little help is to be expected there; take a minister of large abilities, if once he comes to have some other penny in his eye besides the souls of people, seldom shall it be seen that the Lord is present there; Satan doth not cast out Satan, neither is his kingdom divided: when Peter fisheth for himself, all night he catcheth nothing; but when the Lord comes, and for his sake he casts out the net, then the net is full; and for to be a means to convey the Spirit to any; it is their life; as in others, when gain comes in, they could not live without it. "Now we live," saith Paul, "if you stand." 1 Thess. iii. 8. This is their glory, "You are our joy and glory," (1 Thess. ii. 20;) this is their gain, though it be by loss of all; life is not dear to finish their minis-

try; "I suffer all things for the elect's sake;" they are willing to spend and to be spent, (2 Cor. xii. 15;) Paul wisheth himself *anathema; amor divinus est exstaticus;* it carries out of self, (Rom. ix. 1–3;) though it is true the ministry was not blessed to all, yet the election obtained it, (Rom. xi. 7;) hence the ministry is from men, not angels, that there might be the more pity, and so the more help. Heb. iv. 2.

Section IV.

2. But why by the ministry of the gospel?

Reason 1. Because the "law can not give life." Gal. iii. 21. Now, the Lord can not make him that hath sinned not to have sinned; that would be a contradiction; "and he that hath sinned must die;" and hence there is no possibility for the Spirit to give life here: hence the Spirit takes another instrument; the gospel can persuade to believe, and bring to Christ, where life is seated.

Reason 2. Because there is more of Christ's blood here, and hence more Spirit; for they are all one to be cleansed with blood and Spirit; for the Lord Jesus did not by his blood purchase the unsealing of the law; but the gospel is a secret, and not known but by this means; it is the new testament which ariseth from the death of the testator; to have the news of the gospel printed, it is by means of Christ's blood; but to have men sent to open it, there is more of his blood therein, and hence more Spirit.

Reason 3. Because there is more of Christ's love in the gospel; and where most of his love goes, there his Spirit goes most; it is love to make us know the law, though it be a handwriting against us; but now (when we see death) to bring the gospel, and therein to entreat and wait, there is great love; and hence it is called the ministry of reconciliation. O, it is infinite pity to offer to take a dead carrion up under his wings; here longs for the salvation of a sinner most; if we were fallen angels, he would never send the ministry of the gospel to us; but so it is now, that he hath taken the seed of Abraham.

Section V.

Use 1. *Of Instruction.* 1. Hence we may see the glory of the gospel, in that it is the ministry of the Spirit of God; this the apostle professeth it exceeds in glory; glorious light it scatters, "that which hath been hid from the wise, nay, from prophets, and

Abraham who desired to see this day, and saw it but afar off; hence it is called marvelous light," which brings the soul to the light of that blessed face of Jesus, and his glorious love, which never shall be sounded to the bottom of it, which damps the glory of all other things; and although many great and wise despise it, yet if they did know they would not despise the Lord of glory, nor crucify him; but their eyes shall never see those glorious consolations and comforts promised to the people of God; "I will send the Comforter," saith Christ, "which never can be taken away" from believers, which in the midst of all misery comforts; it is a great mercy when a man sees his sin, else he would never seek for remedy; but the law can not do any thing but arrest and imprison; it can not get sin removed; yet the gospel can set at liberty, "which preaches deliverance to prisoners," (John viii. 32;) "You shall know the truth, and that shall make you free. I can through Christ," etc. Phil. iv. 13. It is a marvelous mercy to tremble before God, and see, and know, and be affected with God's wrath; but yet if this be all, the heart will sink and fly from God; now the gospel reveals Christ, and so (John x. 16) "his sheep hear and follow him;" and the gospel comes to hell with the Spirit, to a poor sinner when he is blind, captive, broken, mourning, never so miserable; now the gospel penetrates thus low, and brings the Spirit with it; it makes the soul not only to see Christ, but gives it him, and now it is safe. O, (beloved!) if the Spirit be glorious, then is the gospel glorious; if the ministry of men could bring in, and draw with them the princes of this world, and all their wealth, to serve you, angels and their ministry, nay, bring Christ himself bodily to you, how glorious were this! but what is this to bring the Spirit into a sty, into thy soul! O, therefore, take heed of a light esteem of the gospel, as those (Matt. xxii. 3) which were shut out: men must speak something; take heed, you that have once esteemed it, of accounting it a common thing, (it is next to the unpardonable sin,) of accounting the gospel, ministers, truths, justification by faith, etc., common things; but see them glorious; the greatest glory that ever was in the world did once lie hid under the meanest outside, viz., Jesus Christ, and yet the apostles beheld his glory; so the gospel is most glorious now, as being his glass, and this, notwithstanding, is most mean in the account of many; Paul is, in the eyes of the Corinthian doctors, a mean man; his presence was contemptible, his words mean also; men despised them.

Secondly. Hence see what cause they have to sit, and go home to their houses lamenting, that never found the Spirit conveyed

by the ministry of the gospel in life and power; (Lam. i. 16,) "O, the Comforter, that should refresh my soul, is far from me;" if there be any hope of help, it is by the Spirit; and if the Spirit, it is by the ministry where the gospel is published and the Spirit conveyed. O, thinks many a one in himself, I find no such good! thus long have I heard, and thus oft do I hear, but I come, and go away as I came, my heart never shaken, my soul never broken, my spirit never humbled, nor comforted, etc., and therefore what care I for ministers or gospel? It is true, it is hid, (2 Cor. iv. 3,) but then it is "from them that be lost" only, whom Satan hath blinded; it may be the last medicine is now using; as it is with many that have the last remedy applied when they be sick to death; truly, so it is here.

Heb. vi. 8, "The tree or ground that brings forth briers is nigh to cursing;" the condition is sad, as it is there expressed, "It shall never see good when good comes." Jer. xvii. 6. O, it was a sad complaint of Saul, "O, the Lord answers me not!" and of the people of God, "We see no vision;" but you have none, and lament it not; if men in the old law did not meet with the Lord in their tent doors, it was no wonder, it was not usual so to do; but when at the tabernacle, if they meet not there with him, it was sad then; so here: if you meet not the Lord there where he dwells, it is strange; not but that saints may find the Lord absent, but I speak to them that find it not, and mourn not for it; others shall rejoice when they mourn for the absence of the Lord.

Section VI.

Use 2. Of confutation of those that think there is not that necessity of the ministry to convey the Spirit; but,—

First. Think good books may do the deed, and hence can profit as much at home as thereby; but these virgins are not directed to books, but persons, (though there is a good use of books also;) books are but a carcass of the living word.

Secondly. They that would have it by immediate revelation, by elevations of the soul to God, a familistical principle collected from the apocrypha speculations of devout monks, received in Germany when the gospel was preached to overthrow it, and entertained by the deceitful experiences of some, (as in London, etc.,) she that was converted by dreams, etc., indeed we are to look for the Spirit; but to look for it without the word is vile; if the apostles were living, these would overthrow their doctrines.

Object. What can man do? (say many:) you must look for the living voice of Christ; the word is but a dead letter, and will only make you a Jew in letter.

Ans. If indeed we had only souls, and no bodies, then we might lay aside our Bibles; but seeing it is not so, look to the word thus dispensed; hence the Lord saith, "Hear, and your souls shall live;" these say, Hear not, etc.

Section VII.

Use 3. Of terror to all them that oppose the ministry of the Lord Jesus and resist it; the Holy Ghost being in it, you resist the Holy Ghost himself, and that not only where he is dropped, but most abundantly poured out. Acts vii. 51, 52. How did they resist the Holy Ghost? they did but resist men; no, it was the Holy Ghost there, for so he spake those words, and the Spirit had some operation upon their hearts by those words. Zech. vii. 12; Heb. ix. 30.

Sometimes the Spirit puts forth its prerogative power; then it is not overcome; sometimes words without power, and then men resist and overcome it, (for that is the meaning, because all men resist, more or less,) and this is enmity against the Spirit, (Acts v. 39,) "fighters against God," which is a most sad and heavy evil, for to be left to that evil to overcome the Comforter himself; as he said, "Is it not enough to grieve man, but you must grieve my God also?" Is. vii. 13.

Section VIII.

Quest. But who doth resist thus?

Ans. 1. Some do it by silencing and persecuting of the ministry of the Spirit, which is most grievous. When Amos preached against Bethel, up steps Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, (Amos vii. 10,) and first makes complaint of him to the king; first, that he was factious and conspired against the king; and secondly, that the land was not able to bear his words; that he troubled the country and kingdom with his doctrine, viz., That we shall all die if we receive not his doctrine; and hence he commands him to depart and flee from thence, and prophesy no more there; but you see what he answers, "I was a herdsman, and the Lord called me;" think not that you oppose a private spirit, but the Lord's that called me; and hence see, because he did but say so, what his sentence is upon his wife, children, himself, and upon all Israel. Are there not many Amaziahs in these days? do they not take the same course? is not the same spirit working against the Spirit of God? now what will their end be? Let a man be never so peaceable in his place, blessed in his work, if he

doth but reach Bethel, nay, if only the judgments of them, the altars there, and idols there; Amos may prophesy in another land, but no more there; but what will be the end of this? see verse 17; it is a sad speech, (1 Thess. ii. 16,) "forbidding us to preach to the Gentiles that they may be saved; for the wrath of God is come upon them to the utmost." You know the Jews raised up persecution against them wherever they came, but "wrath is upon them for it even to the utmost:" why, look as it is in hell, to resist the gospel one's self is heavy; but when in hell there they wish that no others might receive it, or that it might not be preached to any other, that none might ever know the Lord. So it is here; it is greater wrath to oppose God in hell, than to be opposed of God, and the first they are come to. O, but they garnish the sepulchers of the prophets, and beautify their temples, and if they had lived in the days of the prophets they would never oppose them.

Object. But there are other kinds of hotspurs and novices?

Ans. Matt. xxiii. 30, 35, "You shall have scribes and wise men, and you shall kill them, that upon you may come all the blood that ever was spilt;" and blood they must have who are the open persecutors of the prophets and saints of God first or last; certainly God is remembering the tears and troubles of his banished, distressed seers.

2. Some others, by reviling and reproaching of the ministry; for Satan in the hearts of the wicked, if he can not hurt it with his teeth, he will seek to destroy it by his tongue: how was Paul censured by a company of proud Corinthians, that when they had nothing against him almost, yet they censure him for his manner of speaking and carriage! 2 Cor. x. 10. His letters are mighty, but his presence base. How was John, though for a time, flocked after? and Christ Jesus himself was thus evilly reputed; this was that which brought the total ruin of the Jews, mocking at the messengers of God. 2 Chron. *ult.* 16. When Paul had persuaded Sergius Paulus, and Elymas gainsaid, saith Paul, (Acts xiii. 10,) "O, full of subtlety, and child of the devil, enemy to all righteousness, (why to all? because all grace comes to be wrought here by the word,) thou shalt be blind."

How have the messengers and ministers in this country been trampled upon by some, who, though they have not yet been able to reach them by their power, yet by vile reproaches so pursuing most of them, that one would stand and wonder at the blindness and boldness, not of moral men, but church members and professors, and at the wrath of God upon them, that ever they should be left to be scorners of them, of whom the con-

sciences of the vilest can not but sometime say, "Verily God is with you!" Yea, grace itself hath been pretended to be the weapon, by which the ministers of the gospel of Christ have been fought against; and indeed the vilest opinions usually have been sheltered under grace; that hath been the king's colors, which the enemies of the kingdom of Christ have lifted up to deceive; for in places of profession, not merit and works, old shoes, etc., but grace and Christ, (Matt. xxiv. 24,) are most fit to deceive.

And hence, if ministers have persuaded men to believe, and receive the gospel, what can we do? (say many:) God must do all; if evidences and signs of a good estate be called for out of the word; it is a way of works, almost flat Popery in their books. If ministers have had the Spirit burning within them, seeing people led from the truth, and so speak against them that deceive them, it is passion and bitterness; if they have sought to keep the hearts of God's people close, one to another, the strong man then keeps the palace. What should I name all?

Quest. But for what is it that they are thus scandalized?

Ans. 1. For preaching that we are justified by faith, and that faith is required to the entertainment of Christ as a condition of the gospel; here is not bread, (say men.)

2. For preaching that sanctification is an evidence of justification; and though it be granted the Lord never justified any without a work of vocation at least, and this is not against God's grace to justify by faith, yet it is against grace, and it is a way of works, say some, to see myself justified by faith. If the word did reveal a second justification by faith, and a first justification without faith, then our first evidence might be without sight of faith, because there is some word which reveals our being justified without it; but the word reveals all our justification to be by faith; and thus for preaching the gospel of Christ have the servants of the Lord been reproached. And though they keep it in, yet how many are there whose hearts go after these detestable things!

3. Some resist the Spirit by despising inwardly, and so casting off the word of the Lord; (Heb. ii. 2, 3,) "If we neglect or slight so great salvation;" and when was the gospel more slighted by many? every thing we say is dear but gospel; which should make us mourn that ever it should be said to this country, You despise the Spirit of God: a man of greatness suffers by nothing so much as by contempt; so it is with the Spirit of grace: and it is a thousand to one but that there will be something to make them despise at last the Lord himself. But the word comes thus to be despised and cast off, —

SECTION IX.

First. Partly by the false report of others, as if they were factious disturbers of peace, men under a covenant of works, etc. It is the Jesuits' policy to raise up lies; and though all will not believe them, yet some will stick.

Secondly. Partly by covetousness; the glory of the things of this world is greater than the glory of the gospel: tell them of living by faith and promises, they deride you in their hearts; tell them of a kingdom, and the excellency of holiness, they slight them; to be so rich and honored, it is glorious indeed. Luke xvi. 14. The Pharisees scorned him because they were covetous.

Thirdly. Sometimes because ministers and ministry are bills of charges to a congregation, and are too costly inhabitants among them.

Fourthly. Partly because of ignorance of the truth; why was Paul's ministry foolishness? It was a mystery; so many come and understand not the truths preached; they be too high points for them to conceive of; let truth be never so precious, they esteem it not, because they know it not.

Fifthly. Partly because they have known all that our ministers do preach before, which is now like flowers and roses withering, which were flourishing heretofore. Capernaum despiseth that which Sodom would not, and Tyre and Sidon would have repented at; and say, they can do as well themselves as this, and better.

Sixthly. Partly because ministers are so long at it; and that may be delivered in one hour which is stood upon an hour and a half, and they wonder men preach so little, and yet so long; which argues contempt, and that every truth is not precious. Men cry not out of men when they are telling money to them many hours; and yet this is more precious; Eutychus grows sleepy, thank Paul for preaching so long; and falls down, thank long sermons for that. This is the sinful language of some.

Seventhly. Because they can not profit by them; hence, when they should mourn for themselves, they despise the truth of the Lord; (Mic. ii. 7,) "Are not my words good to him that walks uprightly?"

Eighthly. Because some have weaker gifts than others. And thus I say, the ministry of the Lord and his Spirit is despised; (Matt. xviii. 8,) "Take heed you despise not little ones, for angels behold them;" O, what is it, then, to despise the Spirit himself? And thus I say the Spirit of God is resisted; go home, therefore, and mourn, and consider, 1. The time is already set;

"the Spirit will not always strive;" and time may come that it will go from you, and never return to you more. 2. Fire will come out of their mouths. Rev. xi. 5. 3. The ministry shall be taken from you and your children. Acts xiii. 46. 4. The Spirit itself shall torment you. Is. lxiii. 10.

Section X.

Of Exhortation. O, therefore, if ever you would have the Spirit dispensed to you, wait here upon the ministry of the gospel for it; neglect not private helps, books and meditations, etc., but know, if ever you have it dispensed, here it is chiefly to be had, buy at this shop.

Do you not find parched, dried-up hearts? the Spirit of God is gone from men; and this verily is the cause of it: what consolations, what peace, what glory from the Spirit of all comfort, of peace and glory might men have, but for this!

Object. But I may never get this Spirit.

Ans. Yes, "Hear, and your souls shall live," (Is. lv. 3;) (for to reprobates the Lord never gives an ear:) what a comfort is this! you can not help yourselves to look to Christ; hear him, then, when he is come to thee; (Rom. xi. 7, 8,) he hath given them ears not to hear; and usually the first work of the Spirit in the soul is, to give an ear; the Lord awakens that to listen, that never regarded any thing before; and then something enters first or last.

Section XI.

Quest. How shall I so hear as to receive the Spirit?

Ans. 1. Get a deep sense of your wants particularly and distinctly before you come; if a man comes to the market, and knows not what his family wants, he will never come and buy of them that sell: a poor man, if he comes into a rich shop, hath a mind to buy all the commodities he sees if he had money; but if it may be had without money, he will take them gladly. Matt. xi., "The poor receive the gospel;" I am persuaded that this is the great cause why scarce any buy here; they know not their need of every truth; hence, (Is. l. 4,) "He hath given me the tongue of the learned to preach a word in season to the weary:" the Lord will do it in season, when the heart is weary of its own deceit and ignorance, and all carnal contents, and blessings, and sins, now the Lord Jesus must speak at last; let a people be more weary of outward miseries than of inward, "they will not regard Moses by reason of

anguish of spirit;" this keeps off many a man; either he feels only outward miseries; his mind is broken with cares, How shall I live? with losses and crosses, family is sick, cattle die, servants are untoward and unfaithful; his drink is turned to water, and the English flower is gone; his friends respect him not, his acquaintance grow strange; these things lie more heavy than sin.

2. Pray before you come; for as it is in men that trade, their servants are ready to let out their commodities, but ask the master first whether he will sell them or no to you; so ask the Lord first. Ministers are but servants under the Lord; it is not as they will, but as the Lord will dispense; (Matt. xi. 25,) "I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent," though Christ himself preached: O, therefore, look up to the Lord: O Lord, let not thy gospel be a hidden thing from mine eyes. I am persuaded you should see strange things, and grow up more and more if thus you did. When Christ told them that the Spirit should come, he bids them wait for it, "and they continued instant in prayer, (Acts i. 4,) and then the Spirit of God came upon them," though extraordinarily, yet here ordinarily; (Ps. li.) "Lord, cause me to hear the voice of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice;" and hence the Lord complains, (Is. l. 3,) "Why, when I came, was there no intercessor?" as if he should say, he would have given them help else; O, therefore, before you come, and when you come, pray, Lord, speak; pray all the week long that there may be some Sabbath mercies for you.

3. Give the Lord the price of his gospel; men that come to buy must give the price. Zech. xi. 12. And God will not let you have any thing without price; give away all thou hast (when thou comest to hear) to the Lord, let him pluck or take any thing from thee, only let him not take away himself, and his Spirit; prize the least truth above all the world, as indeed it is better; the Lord may else deny these pearls to you. Heb. iv. 2, "The word did not profit, because not mixed with faith;" and what is the property of that? (*vide* 1 Pet. ii. 5, 6,) "To him that believes the Lord is precious, the Spirit is sent, (John xiv. 17,) whom the world can not receive, because they know him not." O, he is not sweet nor precious to them.

Three things are here to be laid out and given to God at the hearing of the word:—

1. Thy thoughts; let a man have never so much meat, if he feed not upon it, never will he have spirits thereby; therefore, while hearing-time lasts, be taken up with those things you hear; be in them, "that your profiting may appear to all;" you know not so much, but that there is more yet to be known.

2. Thy heart; love it; Christ's love was so great as to shed his blood, that he might purchase this word of his gospel for thee, and wilt not thou let thy love out of thy heart to it when it is for thee?

3. Labor; labor for the Spirit here, "as for the meat that endures forever," (John vi. 27;) Christ will give it you; spare no pains and labor upon it, to enjoy, and be eternally advantaged by it.

Thus much of this second thing in this second part of the parable: now the third follows, viz., the coming of Christ himself.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCERNING CHRIST'S COMING.

SECTION I.

Now this coming of Christ is set forth and amplified from two things.

1. From the time of his coming; while the foolish went to buy, he came.

2. From his different entertainment of the virgins, and carriage toward them being come.

First. The wise they went in with him to the marriage.

Secondly. The foolish were shut out, etc.

1. By this coming of the Lord is (as hath been oft said) meant the coming of Christ to death or judgment; but especially and principally his coming to judgment, as may appear by the whole series of this chapter and the next, wherein the Lord answers to the second question of his disciples, viz., the signs and time of his coming, i. e., his second coming, which is called his coming to judge the world, etc.

2. That there is and shall certainly be a second coming of Christ to judgment.

This truth the prophets have foretold; Enoch, Jude xiv., Solomon, Eccles. xii. *ult.*, Rom. xiv. 11, with Is. xliv. 23. The apostles have preached thus, as 2 Cor. v. 10, and it was ever in their eye, and the main part of their ministry when they pressed people to believe in Christ as a king; where is he? He shall come, they tell the unbelieving world; angels also have published this, (Acts i. 11,) and devils believe this, who are in their chains bound over to that day; and all the saints have looked for this, (1 Thess. i. *ult.*,) and hence promises of mercy

at that time are made to such. Heb. ix. *ult.* And lastly, the consciences of many wicked people have confessed this; Paul preacheth of judgment to come, and Felix trembles; and (Heb. vi. 5) divers felt the powers of the world to come, and by judgments on them have been made to know that he is the Lord.

Section II.

Quest. 1. But when shall the Lord Jesus come?

Ans. In general when all the elect are gathered under the wings of Christ; hence, (Matt. xxiv. 22,) "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," i. e., an utter ruin of all had then come, but for them; and hence in particular judgments the Lord doth thus; only a few elect keep a whole land from being wasted. Is. vi. *ult.;* 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24. First Christ is quickened, i. e., in soul and body raised, then those that are Christ's at his coming, and then comes the end; and hence the tares are spared, lest in pulling up them, the wheat also be plucked up.

Now, as for setting down the particular time, the Lord Jesus doth it not in this chapter; only gives some signs of it, by which we may give certain credit that it is not far off, (as of the death of a crazy man,) and there are two that are not yet accomplished.

1. The destroying of antichrist, at least in the principal power of it, and throne of it.

2. The calling of the Jews, (Rom. xi.,) who must have a great day of it again; which dry bones shall live; and their restoring a kind of resurrection and life from the dead. Some have thought two thousand years before the law, and under the law, and under Christ; and then, when these six days of a thousand years apiece are ended, comes the great Sabbath: this is already proved to be false in the second two thousand years. In the primitive times and churches, the apostles, especially James and Peter, spake of the end of all things to be at hand, who, writing to the scattered Jews, had good reason to tell them of it, viz., the end of the temple. Though Baronius, to weaken the authority of Scripture, thinks they spake only their own apprehensions; divers Christians thought then it was nigh, and hence Paul entreats them to beware of those thoughts, seeing much danger in them. 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2. And in succeeding ages, Tertullian expresseth the affection of the Christians to the Roman state, that they sought not the ruin of it, but prayed *pro mora finis,* as fearing it was then coming upon the world for sin; and so many saints, seeing wickedness abound, have thought that

time is not far off; but yet the times and seasons are not in our hands to know, (Acts i. 7,) and that must quiet us that come he will.

Section III.

Quest. 2. Where will he come to judge?

Ans. Into this visible world again; for if it should be in heaven, as no unclean thing shall come there, so we should then rather come to Christ to be judged, than for him to come to judgment. No, there is a second coming; that as his first was into this visible world, so shall his second; (Acts iii. 21,) "Whom the heavens must contain until the restitution of all things;" and then shall he break out of heaven again for this work: now, to what particular place in the world he shall come to judge is disputed on by many, especially some of the schoolmen. Some think that it shall be in Mount Calvary, where he was crucified; some in Mount Olivet, where he ascended; others in the valley of Jehosaphat, (Joel iii. 2,) which, as it can not contain all people that ever were, so the place only speaks of the terror of God against the enemies of his scattered Jews at their conversion: I would not be wise above what is written; all that I read most plainly of is, (1 Thess. iv. 17, 18,) "That then we shall meet the Lord in the air;" now, how high, or where the Lord's throne shall be set, those things are not for us to inquire after; but so the Lord will order it, as that all nations, "all the dead, small and great, shall stand before him," and see him in one place; which shall not be very low; where men have sinned, there they shall be judged; and hence, as judges have their circuits, so men, having sinned in this world, shall be judged here.

Section IV.

Quest. 3. How will he come to judge?

Ans. "He shall come in power and great glory." Matt. xxiv. 30. As, first, the glory of the Father, (Matt. xvi. 27;) the brightness of his Deity, his infinite wisdom, was hid in the dark lantern of his humanity; but then he shall appear, as it is said, (Rom. i. 4,) manifested to be the Son of God by his resurrection, so then much more when he comes to raise the world; all the world shall see his power, wisdom, greatness then.

Secondly. All his mighty angels with him, (Matt. xvi. 27,) all shall be there, so that heaven shall be left empty; "a thousand times ten thousand shall then minister unto him;" and you

know how gloriously the Lord made the angels shine at Christ's resurrection.

Thirdly. With the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and with a shout; (1 Thess. iv. 16,) "He shall descend with a shout," i. e., of joy to the saints, as in the day of victory and triumph of God; as at giving the law the trumpet did blow to work dread and terror then, so now.

Fourthly. With burning and consuming of the world. 2 Pet. iii. 7; 2 Thess. 1.

Fifthly. Raising and calling all the dead before him, small and great, good and bad, in earth and sea, and that in a moment, it shall not be a long work, (1 Cor. xv. 52;) and thus the Lord shall appear at this day, that as he came before with baseness, so he shall now come in glory, and nothing then shall have any glory but himself, and those that are his, because he will damp all the glory of the world; and thus, sitting in the clouds, in a throne of glory, he shall judge; i. e., examine, convince, and condemn; examine all secrets, and convict men of their evils, and then condemn them, and pass sentence upon the wicked, and grace to his saints; the saints' examinations; and all their duties and actings for God opened, and that all the world that censured them may see then the infinite wisdom and love of God in his people, in making and keeping them sincere.

Section V.

Quest. 4. Why will he come?

Ans. 1. If it was only for his people's sake, for their perfect redemption and refreshing, there were reason enough for it; hence it is called a "day of redemption, and a time of refreshing;" here they are captived under miseries, and sadded by them under sin, Satan, world; but then they shall be redeemed; now, that it shall be so, —

First. He hath come already to redeem his people from sin, which is the greatest evil, and which redemption was performed by his blood; now, if he hath redeemed from the greatest evil, viz., sin, then from corruption, then from death, and Satan, etc. If he once came by blood and baseness, then he will come in glory and greatness; if he came through fire to them, then he will come through fair ways to them; if by death to them, then by life to them; and hence, (John v. 24,) "all judgment is committed to him, because he is the Son of man." And though it be long, yet surely he will, he must come, especially seeing himself hath perfectly redeemed his people, and is now himself

exalted above all. A man that hath been in prison himself, with his poor brethren that are left there still, the price of their redemption being paid, and there being nothing for their deliverance wanting but one to fetch them, if none help, he will do it alone: so here.

Secondly. In regard of the justice of God, that that may be cleared before the eyes of all the world; men sin now, and are not punished, but flourish, and the saints are grieved; every man sees patience, bounty, long-sufferance exercised; but the wrath of God against the least sins is not yet made known; there must therefore be a day to declare it, and the equity of it.

Thirdly. In regard of the wisdom of God: look in all commonwealths well governed in the world, and we shall not find any but they have court days, and their petty sessions and great assizes, as in Israel; for to what extremity of wickedness would places come to else? so here; shall the wise Governor of the world never have a day of hearing and trying causes? hath he no care? others are but in his room under him till that time: neither is it enough to say that there is judgment of death. *Ans.* That is only Christ's judging the soul in private, either to his shame or glory before Christ; but the body is to be judged as well as the soul, to shame before men, or glory before all the world.

Fourthly. In regard of Christ's sovereignty and excellency; the coming of Christ is called his kingdom. 2 Tim. iv. 1. Why, doth not Christ rule now in the world? Yes, but it is in the midst of his enemies; his enemies rule, and he rules also; but there must a time come that no enemies must rule, but Christ alone: and this is his kingdom in a most illustrious manner; for the things of Christ are said to be with us, when they do in a special manner appear; as the coming of his Spirit, and his love, so his kingdom; now Christ must reign till all his enemies are put under foot; for it is not fit he should lose his kingdom; hath the Lord suffered others to reign and rule, and himself to be hid, and his glory lost, and that so long? and will he never return to his kingdom to be glorious, there to reap all his glory that he hath lost by all his enemies in the world? was there ever king that would ever endure one generation of rebels after another, and never make himself sole sovereign? however man may suffer it, yet the Lord will not, he must reign. And wherefore doth Christ reign? it is to trample enemies under foot, his and his people's enemies; Christ sets death, his enemy, to destroy his enemies, and keep them as in a jail; but afterward, Christ will call them forth, and pass an irreversible doom upon them.

Section VI.

Use 1. See, therefore, and believe the truth of this point as well as hear it: at the first coming of Christ, (Heb. xi. 13,) they did thus, saw the promises afar off, and embraced them; so see it afar off. There be divers people that profess this truth, that do not fully believe it; for if they did, they would never live as they do: that look as men, that know the judge rides circuit within half a year, dare not commit any open sins; so if you believed this, you would make conscience of secret sins which this judge shall judge.

Others there be that do believe it as they do reports that every man saith, but they do not see that really to be true indeed, which their hearts literally believe; and hence men's hearts are not a whit moved with grief, or sorrow, or joy, or fear at the remembrance of this day. For as it is with us in reports of news out of Germany, many hear things, but are not affected with their misery, because they do not see it acted before their eyes; God presents not their sorrows, and hence they are not moved; but when they do see them acted, then they are moved much; so here. Look as it is with a man awake and in sleep: a man awake believes the day of judgment, and never stirs; but when asleep he dreams of it, and is much affected with that because he sees it acted before his eyes; much more when men have not dreams, but real visions or sight of it, it will affect: and hence set painted fire before a malefactor, it affects not, but show him really it wherein he must be burnt, now it amazeth him; and hence (2 Pet. ii. 11, 12, 14) looking for; and hence Peter saith, "What manner of persons ought we to be!" and wherever there is faith, thus it will be, (Heb. xi. 1,) "it makes things absent present, and things unseen evident."

O that God would show you this truth, you young men! (Eccl. xi. 9;) you would not spend time vainly, but know God: you aged men, whose hearts are rooted in this world, O, know that God will come and burn up your delights: will you never see this day and fear it before you see it, and mourn because of it?

O, take heed of rash judging and condemning, and suspecting, and censuring other men. In Paul's time, (Rom. xiv. 10,) one brother in a church there judged another about indifferent things in a Christlike manner, as if he had no grace, etc. "You shall stand before Christ's judgment seat," saith Paul; and hence Paul (1 Cor. iv. 3–5) accounts little of man's judgment, and bids them judge nothing, etc. What if Christ find that to be a lie which thou judgest to be true!

Many of God's servants lie under hard thoughts and speeches in private, not only from enemies abroad, but from inhabitants at home; men out of the church censuring and judging members; men in the church, one of another, especially if they take it to a side; the Lord will discover hard speeches, and an edition of all your hard thoughts put out in print at the last day: this breaks love, this breaks church fellowship, and is the cause of breaches in this country.

Use 3. O, take heed of a hypocritical heart; if the Lord should come to judge according to the seeing of the eyes of the outward man, then well were it with many; but when the secrets of the hearts shall be judged, it will be terrible; if there should never be a calling over of things again, happy were it for many, but it is otherwise; (2 Cor. v. 10,) Paul sought only to please the Lord, "for we must all appear," etc. Civil men, if they can carry it so as men may not say hurt of them, they think it is well: hypocrites, if they can maintain a name of religion, so as they may maintain their interest in good men's hearts, it is well; if they get some enlargement in duties, that they are commended of them, well; if they can get so much mercy as to get the Lord to accept of Christ's righteousness for them, it is well; but saith Paul, "We labor to be accepted of him." I am persuaded godly men do not think of this; we think the wicked shall have all their secrets laid open, but the saints come not into condemnation; it is true, not of wrath, but of trial, so as that their righteousness shall be laid open to all, to their glory at the great day. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. And therefore get that life which Christ himself may commend; that as Christ said, "I have not found such faith in Israel." So here, when thou hast spoken a good word, repeated a sermon, spent a Sabbath, ask thy heart, Is this worth showing to all the world? that though it be vile, yet Christ himself will commend this? O, you will find only acting for him will commend the act, (Matt. xxv. 40;) there is that needlework, and golden arras of holiness, which is lapped up in the saints, that Christ will open before all the world another day.

Use 4. O, therefore, repent! (Acts xvii. 31,) Paul tells them, times past were spent in ignorance without God, time to come was a time of judgment and wrath of God against all sin; O, then, repent! mourn for all wrongs done against Christ: you will wail then, if you take not your season now; mourn therefore for time past, and for time to come agree with him; now he sits on a throne of mercy in heaven, if thou wouldst not be put to shame; then, O, be ashamed for all sins now; if not judged

then, then condemn and judge thyself now; the Lord looks for no more; O, welcome him as King into thy heart as his kingdom.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF CHRIST COMING AS A BRIDEGROOM TO HIS OWN.

Section I.

Observ. 2. That the Lord Jesus Christ shall come as a bridegroom to his own people, at his second coming; that as it is said of the sun, it ariseth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth, etc., so will the Lord arise upon the world at this day. Ps. xix. 5.

This point will be cleared and proved by opening the several degrees wherein he will manifest himself to be a bridegroom then to his people; not but that Christ is a bridegroom to his people now, but then he shall be so also in a more eminent manner, and then the perfect accomplishment of all.

First. Then there shall be a personal meeting between his spouse and himself, as it is in marriage; before the marriage is consummated, there are the friends of the bridegroom and spokesmen, and he sends letters and tokens, but then he comes himself; so here Christ sends his spokesmen, (2 Cor. xi. 2,) and his word and spiritual refreshings, but when this time comes, he appears himself in person, and both meet in person; (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17,) here we meet the Lord spiritually in his ordinances, but then visibly in the clouds; while we live in this world, it is a time of parting, (2 Cor. v. 8,) and when we come to die, in respect of the whole man, it is so also; but then the whole man shall meet him; these eyes shall see him, and those arms shall embrace him; you are left as orphans here in this world alone; it will not always be thus, for there is a time of meeting.

Secondly. Then all deformities shall be taken away from his people, and he shall adorn his bride in perfect beauty; for this is one part of Christ's conjugal love to his spouse and people, (Eph. v. 25,) different from other husbands, who find but do not make them beautiful; for if the Lord should meet his people, and they him with their deformities, they would do it unwillingly and with shame: as in this life why are saints unwilling yet to be with the Lord? viz., because there be so many deformities and spots abiding on the spouse; sometimes the soul would not have Christ, and such a heart too, though he offers himself to it;

"Lord, depart, I am a sinful man." Luke v. 8. O, but then all deformities shall be removed; (Phil. iii. *ult.*,) "who shall change our vile bodies," not destroy them; "and make them like his glorious body," which shines brighter than the sun; (Matt. xiii. 43,) "Then shall the righteous shine like the sun:" is there any beauty like that of Christ's? "Then shall they be like unto him;" (1 John iii. 2,) it is a dishonor for a mighty prince on the day of marriage to let his queen go in rags; they shall be Christ's then; and look as it was with Joseph, all his shame, baseness, imprisonment, did but make way for his glory; and hence he was delivered out of prison by the king's command; now his apparel, and countenance, and name, and estate, and all is changed; so here, all your shame, imprisonment in the grave-chains of sin, that enter into your soul, doth but make way for this certain glory; as it was with Jehosuah, Satan stood at his right hand to accuse him; he only stands before the Lord; at last the Lord saith, "Take off these filthy garments;" is not this a brand? So Satan and conscience accuse often here, but then it shall be that all thy filthy garments shall be taken away.

Thirdly. Then there shall be an open manifestation and glorious declaration of the dearest love of the Lord toward them; before the great day of marriage comes, there is love expressed, concluded between the parties, and it may be some few know of it, as friends, and some of the family, but the open declaration is at the day of marriage; so Christ loves his people now, etc., and will not only love them then, but openly declare his love before all the world; "Come, ye blessed;" he shall declare then his own love. Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8. He that hath made it his glory to confess Christ in a holy life, Christ will confess him before God and before angels, and so before all the world. Men in great place will not know their poor friends, especially in open places, but the Lord Jesus will, and he will divulge the Father's love to them also; (Acts iii. 19,) "You blessed of the Father;" (John xvii. 22–24,) "I have given them that glory, united them, and made them flesh of my flesh, that the world may know thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." Here the Lord doth love his people dearly, but it is not so known; the sun shines on good and bad; the world hates and persecutes them as hypocrites; civil men think them like themselves; worldlings think them as little loved as any, their estates thrive not; hypocrites bear a base esteem of them, and if they love them, it is because they love them; saints themselves many times suspect them, or if not, yet they judge as well of others as them; nay, it may be they are so disfigured sometimes

by those sores that break out of them, that they know not themselves; but now the Lord will openly declare his love to them, and to all the world besides: These are the men that I have borne on my breast, and carried on my shoulders; for whom I have built and planted churches, and destroyed enemies, and trod the wine press alone, and preferred above my own life, and blood, and glory; whose hairs have been numbered by me, whose walls have been continually before me. No greater misery to a holy heart than this: (Ps. xlii. 10,) "Where is now thy God?" so when conscience saith, and men say it here: O, what a mercy is it that then it shall be heard, I am now come to comfort thee!

Fourthly. Then they shall be brought into actual possession and fruition of all the glory promised unto them, of all their inheritance and portion. Before marriage there be promises of such an estate; but when the day is come, then they come to actual and full possession of it, and become equal possessors of the estate; so much in this life the Lord doth promise to possess his people of; there be promises of peace, redemption, victory, and triumph over all enemies, fellowship with God, and all the saints and angels together, an incorruptible inheritance, and now they shall enter into possession of all these; nay, all that Christ hath signified by that word "kingdom;" (Matt. xxv.,) "Come and take the kingdom prepared for you;" (1 Cor. xv. 54,) "Then shall be brought to pass the saying written, O death, where is thy sting?" etc. Is. xxv. 7, 8. So that reckon what Christ hath, you shall have it then. Much mercy the Lord shows to his people now, but, (Ps. xxxi. 19,) "How great is that which is laid up!" then it shall be brought forth; now you shall have an end of all your desires, prayers, faith to feel that which is believed, etc., as it was with Joshua, (xxiii. 14,) "Not one thing whereof God hath failed." Here the poor hardly get bread; here many prayers get nothing, etc.; but there, (2 Thess. ii. 9, 18,) God doth then what he can for them, and gives what he can give to them; then all treasures are broken open.

Fifthly. Then there shall ever be cohabitation and living with him, never to be any more parted from him, or he from them; for while any is a suitor to one in a far country, he comes and goes away again; but when marriage comes, then he carries her to his own house, and now live they must together; so the Lord in this life is sometimes with his people, sometimes absent from his people, but then they must cohabit together, and shall; (1 Thess. iv. *ult.*,) "And then we shall ever be with the Lord." If the Lord should do all the former, and not this, it would be a bitter

cut. When the disciples had Christ's presence for a time, it was sweet; but when parting came, that was bitter; but here is no more parting with the Lord: to be in a king's dominion where peace rules, when other places are slaughter houses and Golgothas, it is good; but to be with the king, and ever with him, and to follow him wherever he goes, and to be familiar with him, this is wonderful: husbands depart, either because not pleased at home, or because of business abroad; all such motion arguing imperfection; but now there shall be nothing in the saints to displease; and Christ's business shall then be done, he shall have no more to do but only to give up the kingdom to God the Father; that is the last work of Christ in this world. To see the Lord in his beauty of grace and love will be wonderful; but for dust and worms to be with him forever, the poor things of the world to be with him when thousands are cast by! we say that is the beauty of a thing which no picture can express; now to see that beauty in Christ is marvelous, but to be in the bosom of one so amiable, how great is this!

Sixthly. Then shall the Lord rejoice over his people, and they in him; marriage day is the great day of joy; they long for it before; and when it comes, the longer it hath been deferred, the more fears of parting, the more are they affected with joy then; so here, the soul hath desired the Lord in grace first, and then in glory. Rev. xxii. Christ hath been desiring after them in glory, (John xvii. 24;) now, their desires being fulfilled, all his scattered, lost elect gathered, now he rejoiceth with exceeding joy; and the longer lost, and meeting deferred, the greater joy now; hence, (Zeph. iii. 11,) "He shall rejoice over thee with joy," etc. Look as the Lord, when they were but converted to him, poor, and miserable, and sinful, and some of them but very babes, (Luke x. 21,) yet he rejoiced in spirit, and falls admiring of the Father; so here much more when they shall become glorious and perfect, and altogether at this day. If the Lord (Is. xl. 1, 2) would have his prophets speak to the heart of Jerusalem when it had but seventy years' captivity, much more will the Lord himself then do it at that day; and look as it was with them, (Rev. xix. 1–6,) hallelujah for the destruction of antichrist, and that Christ reigneth; O, let us rejoice; so shall all saints meet him with joy; being delivered out of the hands of all their enemies, they shall cry hallelujah with joy to see them destroyed, and the Lord reigning; and then shall they up to heaven in a shout of joy with hallelujah, etc.

Section II.

Use 1. Hence see how ill the sin of worldliness or any sinful lust suits with a gracious godly man. Shall the Lord come as a bridegroom to you, and will you run a-whoring from him in this day? A man can bear it when others that he never set his heart upon depart from him; but these to do it is a sin against his kindness, against his person most immediately, and against his name and honor. "As a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband," so here. Covetousness is a vile sin in any, but especially in these; and hence, (Jer. iii. 4, 5,) "Wilt thou not from this time cry, My Father?" When Baruch sought great things, "Wilt thou seek great things when God came to destroy all?" so will you keep great things here when the Lord is destroying all, when your husband will be all in all? When a woman knows that a great prince loves her, she scorns all other suitors, etc. So should you be content, though poor, though sinful, etc., (Col. iii. 4, 5,) as long as Christ loves thee.

Use 2. Hence see what a great sin it is not to receive evidence of mercy and comfort from any promise of Christ wherein he reveals his love to his spouse; if Christ shall come as a bridegroom to you, by what promise soever (therefore) he shall manifest his love to you, receive it; some would not have Christians to receive evidence of Christ's love by any conditional promise; but remember this, that if Christ doth not speak them, if they be not the bridegroom's voice, or if not true, then do not receive them, or any evidence from them, nay, if he doth not by his own Spirit clear them, and apply them; but if they be the voice of the bridegroom, if you be friends, or show yourselves friends, rejoice at it. John iii. 29. As for that immediate revelation of his love, expect it at his meeting, when you shall see him face to face. In the mean while, if he by his letter reveals his love, O, make much of it because it is your bridegroom's; if the day of judgment be come, and resurrection past, and Christ seen immediately, then look not for your evidence from such scriptures; but if otherwise, then own his love here if he speaks. It is true it would be a sweet thing if that day would come; yet as Christ said to Thomas, so say I to you, "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet believed;" and, therefore, whenever the Lord doth this, first or last, hear his voice, and believe his word. Do not say you see nothing in yourselves; suppose a woman should make a match by love and consent, though hardly; she did loathe him, but he was so mighty as to prevail for her good will, and now she is comforted, and another should come and say to her,

How do you know this? Why, thus he sought me, thus I concluded with him, and so fixed. It is no match. Why? You must see no consent, no love, no embracings, etc. Would not such a one be counted a deceiver? 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Use 3. Of terror: what will become of you that refuse the Lord's kindness now, that regard not the bridegroom's voice, that refuse to bestow your hearts upon the Lord? he shall never be a bridegroom to you at this day, when others meet him in the clouds, etc. Now you see saints absent from the Lord, poor and mean, and question the Lord's love to them; but then all shall be seen, and all this you shall lose, (John iii. 32,) "No man receiveth his testimony," etc.; you that never mourned as widows without him, never felt need of his love, what will become of you at this day!

Use 4. Of consolation to all those that be espoused, and contracted to the Lord, who have chose him, who have given themselves to him, who look now no further, but content themselves in him, or have a frame of heart so to do, though fears keep them from possession of him; O, Christ shall come as thy husband at that day. Many Christians fear this day, and hence do not sensibly love, nor long for this day, being under the whip continually of fears, and questioning their estate; but why do you fear, when "the Lord shall come as a bridegroom"? Is. liv. 4, 5, why dost thou fear, himself the Judge so holy, when he is thy husband? You should rather long for this day, and rejoice in it, because now comes your full redemption from all sins, all sorrows; the coming of a husband is sweet.

First. Though the people of God have weaknesses and wants, the Lord hath none.

Secondly. Though they must part for a little while, the Lord is ever with thee.

Thirdly. Though they can not help out of all evil, yet the Lord Jesus will: O, they should rejoice, that when he comes as a Judge, and all the wicked shall melt like wax before his presence, and burn up before him, O, yet a husband to thee!

Section III.

Object. If I knew this!

Ans. Yes, you know it; but here be some things that are false objections against it; as,—

Object. 1. Because the Lord is such a stranger, and the Lord absents himself so much.

Ans. Is that a good argument for a woman? Is. liv. 6–8. It

is not the time of being ever with the Lord in his time of wooing; John xvi. 20, "I will depart, and you shall mourn, the world will not, and your heart shall rejoice."

Object. 2. Because my heart goes so soon, so oft a-whoring from him.

It may be that you are sorely tempted, and thy heart may begin to be taken, etc.; but yet if you can not yield to lie in your falls, this is not an evidence of a breach of the match; (Ps. lxxiii.,) he was almost gone, yet the Lord recovers him, and saith he, "The Lord is with me;" therefore, as it was with Christ, it was not possible that the bonds of death should hold him, so here shall it be with the poor doubting believer.

Object. 3. Because my heart can not love him.

Ans. Why do you then sigh under captivity and bondage of your love? you can not love him, other things do keep you under; O, but can she say she loves not her husband, that doth sigh in bondage to be with him? Consider how it is at Christ's absenting himself from thee (as thou thinkest) at any time; for then love is seen, especially at the time of parting.

Object. 4. Because he is so unkind to me, he hears not all my prayers.

Ans. This is a great objection; if Christ would give them all their portion together which he promiseth them freely in his time, then they think he is kind; not else.

First. Though he did not hear all prayers at once, yet he hath given thee that which is better than all prayer, (viz.,) himself, and a pledge of all the rest, and this is better than ten sons.

Secondly. It would do you hurt; O, therefore, rejoice in this day, whatever thy condition be now: give some women their will, and you give them your lives, and loss of all; so here: and therefore saith Christ, "I will be Lord in my house."

Section IV.

Use 5. *Of Exhortation.* To those that are out of Christ, or do not know that they be in Christ, to labor to get your souls espoused, and matched to the Lord Jesus; it is a laudable custom, grounded on Scripture, that before marriage there is the time of espousals or contract; and such may know, though there be absence for a time, yet that when he saith he will return to marriage, he will come as a husband, though others in the family can not look for any such thing; so here the great work of the ministry is to espouse people to Christ: now that they may be presented chaste virgins unto the Lord Jesus, (2 Cor. xi. 2,) you

may look then that he "shall come as a bridegroom to comfort you;" others can not look for any such presence of Christ, to them that are not espoused to him now. Now Christ is gone up to his kingdom; but let base dust and vile man hearken, the time is coming that he shall come in glory to the amazement of the world; before whom all the wicked shall melt, but the saints shall live in glory, caught up in the clouds of heaven; Christ infinitely rejoicing in them, and they in Christ. Would you have him come thus to you, or as a revenging judge and consuming fire for your contempt? if so, then get your souls espoused to him now.

Section V.

Object. Alas! what can I do? the Lord must do it.

Ans. True; but he doth it by means, the ministry of the gospel; else what need there be any Scripture writ, or gospel preached? use you the means, and wait on the Lord thereby, for the effecting of this.

Quest. What should I do?

Ans. Look as it is in marriage here, or espousals here; there be but two things that make up the match.

1. Earnest suit on the one side.

And, 2. Consent on the other; and therefore, if any thing hinder, it ever lies either on the one side, the man is unwilling, he desires it not; or, on the other side, if he be desirous, she is unwilling; but both these finish the business; if, therefore, you would be ever espoused to the Lord Jesus, look to these two things.

First. See evidently that earnest suit the Lord makes unto thee for thy consent, for thy good will; and this will appear by his own speeches, and this is a sufficient testimony; by what speeches? by his voice in the Scriptures; for is this the bridegroom's voice or no? if not, away with it; if it be, and that they do breathe the Holy Ghost, then know it, it is as if he spake from heaven to thee now.

Object. But he doth not speak to me there by name particularly; he speaks to others, not to me.

Ans. 1. The Lord, when he calls any to himself, he doth not in his ordinary call speak to them by name, and yet they have so received the Lord in the word, as if he had called them by name; for look, as when the law saith, All that sin shall die, the Lord speaks to all by name; and if conscience be awake, it will apply it, This sentence is against me; so when the Lord saith, "All that will receive the Lord shall live before the Lord;" and

therefore receive him, if conscience be awake, it will apply: as in the three thousand that were converted, "What shall we do?" they were not called by name; but when they heard that they that repented should live, because the promise was to all, they gladly received the word; so here it should be so; and therefore we see when the Spirit makes particular application to a man, he so sets on a truth, as if the Lord spake to the soul particularly; and therefore if you do not, it is because you are left of the Spirit of God, and the power of the word; for it is your duty so to do.

2. Though your names are not set down in the words of the promise, yet your names are wrapped up in the meaning and sense of the promise; and this is as good as that; for though the Lord doth not desire every man to keep the Sabbath by name, yet he means every man, and there your names are; so, when the Lord Jesus makes suit to a wretched heart to receive him, he meaneth every man, as if he had named them; that which is set down in Scripture, and written to others, God means not them alone, but all others in like case; as, (Jer. iii. 12,) "What the Lord spake to Israel to return," he meant especially Judah; so (Is. ii. ver. 1 to 5) there is a prophecy of the "Gentiles to flow to the mount of the Lord;" what means the Lord by that? the Lord meant thereby to stir up the Jews, and therefore he saith, "O, come, house of Israel," etc. And hence, (Rom. xv. 4,) "What is written, it is for our learning, that we might have hope;" i. e., God meaneth us therein also; so that when you see the Lord calling the wretched Jews in his word, the Lord calls thee; and when the Lord in his ministry comes to them, he comes to you; and to have thy name in the sense of the Scripture is most for the glory of the Spirit, and suiting best with the work of faith, and most sure, and most sweet to you; but especially, I say, when the messengers of God come to you, they make things particularly clear, which were generally set down: O, consider, therefore, the Lord is earnest in his suit to have thee receive him.

Section VI.

1. It breaks the heart of the Lord Jesus to see thee depart away, and go a-whoring from him; when a man is so set in his desires that when he is crossed of his hopes in marriage, it makes him sick and pine away with grief; because he is very earnest for the match; so it is here. Ezek. vi. 9. And therefore we shall see (Mark viii. 12) the Pharisees, who had seen all his works, yet an adulterous generation, sought after a sign; it is said

Christ sighed deeply in spirit for this; nothing grieves the Lord so much as this: to despise any part of his will, or poorest member of his, grieves him; but to despise himself, this much more; as we shall not find any joy in Scripture like this, when the Lord hath overcome the unkind heart of a rebellious sinner; and hence heaven and earth, and deserts, are commanded to rejoice at this: devise to grieve him, and you can not do it so much as by refusing him.

2. The Lord is so desirous of it, that he will pass by all thy former lewdness, if now thou wilt receive him; (Jer. iii. 1, with 4,) men will not do so, yet the Lord will; what, when so many vanities are loved more than the Lord, can the jealousy of Christ receive me? yes, that he can.

3. When the Lord hath cast off a poor creature for refusing him, yet then his heart yearns and his soul longs for it (many times) again; (Is. liv. 5, 6,) the Lord hath called thee as a wife of youth when refused; i. e., when God did appear to them, to refuse them; O, wonderful! that when the soul hath refused the Lord, and the Lord it, and all creatures refuse to love it, yet these the Lord calls again; and hence the Lord comes upon his people (Is. l.) that complained, "God had utterly rejected them," and all the fault is in him: no, their sins had done it; but then he blames them, that when he came no man answered, etc.

4. All the anger of Christ, especially his greatest anger, is expressed against a soul for want of this being willing to receive him; when you say, How doth the Lord regard or desire me, when he fights against me?

First. Is there an evil not inflicted, but devised against thee? (as many a one fears what is not yet made known,) this is "to make you return." Jer. xviii. 11.

Secondly. Are there any sorrows upon thy conscience, upon thy outward man, "that God takes all comfort from thee"? Hos. ii. 9, 14, 16.

Thirdly. Are there any evils inflicted upon others in this life, especially whole churches, their ordinances broken, temples consumed, and laid into dungheaps? It is to get thy good will. Jer. iii. 8.

Fourthly. Are there any gone down to hell, who did once flourish here, that you have even seen the flames and tears before you of crying ghosts? if so, then know it, "it is that thou mightst draw near the Lord." Ps. lxxiii. 26, 27.

5. The Lord professeth that he will give the choicest of all blessings to them that receive him; and this argues strong desire. Ps. lxxxi. 11–13, "Honey out of the rock."

1. Thou shalt have himself taking infinite delight in thee, because he will make thee beautiful with his own beauty, and clothe thee with it. Ps. xlv. 12.

2. All creatures shall be servants to thee throughout the world. Hos. ii. *ult.* As when one is married, all the servants in the family are to serve her or him, so here it is in regard of the faithful. O that you could hear the voice of the Lord Jesus, and his earnest suit to you herein! This you see is clear.

There now wants nothing but for you to give your consent unto him, and therefore this is that which the Lord lays to the charge of men, viz., their breaking off the match; and so, (Rev. xxii. 17,) "Whoever will, let him come and take;" (Prov. i. 29, 30,) "They did not choose the Lord, nor would none of the Lord's counsel;" and this made the Lord cast them off, so that now there is nothing but thy will: shall the Lord desire it, and wilt not thou be glad of it? there is no beauty in thee, why he should do this to thee: there is in him beauty and excellency; O, shall not this love win thee? shall it be another day? wherefore is all this evil come upon such a one? had he not means? had he not offers? But this shall come against thee, "You would not," O, you would not.

Section VII.

Only take these four cautions concerning your consent.

Take heed that your consent arise not only from fear of misery, for this is forced consent, and is ever naught, and it appears so when the misery is past; many do this in fears of death, or times of calamity; O, then the Lord. Hos. viii. 1–3; Ps. lxxviii. 34, 35.

Secondly. Take heed it be not a conceit of your own making in days of peace; for that which you make from yourselves you will break also; but that it arise from the sense of thine own insufficiency to give consent, and the Lord's almighty power and infinite grace to work it, and then no powers of any creature can untie that knot.

Many hearing of this, Will you have Christ? O, yes, with all my heart, and force a consent by their own labor; this is naught; and hence Ezek. xvi. 60, 61. The Lord will receive that harlot, but not by her covenant; i. e., which she undertook in her own name; no, the Lord must work it; (Jer. iii. 19,) "How shall I do this for thee?" etc.; (Hos. ii. 19,) "I will betroth her:" for no creature can incline the heart to another but the Lord; there is a natural antipathy between Christ and the

soul; and hence we see it in many a Christian; ask him, Why can not you love the Lord, nor cleave to him? O, because I know not why; I can not, I have no heart; the truth is, you have hearts that do loathe him; unless the Lord overcome you, you can never submit indeed unto the Lord.

Thirdly. Look that your consent be not made according to your own terms and conditions; for look as it is with a woman, if she shall say she is content to love such a man; but if she keeps an open inn to entertain all strangers, and love all comers, or if there is one she is in league with, there can be no marriage; so, therefore, the conditions are so: Receive the Lord, and give your consent to love him only; (Prov. viii. 17,) "I love them that love me;" otherwise the match will never be made; (Is. l. 1,) if you keep your wretched, unruly, stubborn wills still, never hadst thou, or shalt thou have the Lord. Let thy sin be never so little, so close, as (it may be) sloth, it is death to pray; it may be it is pride; or whatever else it be, you must have your hearts first divorced from them, or thou canst not have Christ.

Fourthly. Take heed, then, that sense of want of dowry, beauty, portion in or from yourselves, doth not hinder you from consent; for the Lord requires no such thing of you; hence Matt. xxii. 4. All things are ready in Christ to receive from him. Eph. v. 25. It is not for you to make ready to bring to him; only come; and the Lord doth bring his people to sense of vileness, that they may do thus; know that it is his grace that makes the Lord close there.

Section VIII.

Now, will you refuse, and not let the Lord have your hearts this day?

First. Is there any thing in the Lord that should keep thee from consenting? what good is there else but in him? what want of perfection there? his love is better than life; if there be any thing in the world that can be better to thee, or do greater things for thee, make thy match; but who can pay thy debts? who can fetch thee out of prison? who can put beauty on thee? who ever did thee good but the Lord? therefore there is none like him; he will clothe thee, possess thee, etc.

Secondly. Is there any thing in thyself that keeps thee from consenting? hast thou no need of him, or consenting to him? you may, it is true, have other creatures to adorn you; as they, (Ezek. xvi. 37, 38,) "But the Lord will gather your lovers

together, and give you blood and fury in his jealousy;" I mean, when the Lord shall come at this day, to embrace, comfort, glorify others; thou shalt not have a smile from him; O, men now despise the Lord, and his grace and patience; tell them of a match with the Son of God, they regard it not, no more than a tale that is told; well, the Lord will bring you into horrors, wherein you shall prize and be glad of this before you die, even one glimpse of his love.

Post tenebras lucem spero.

After my sickness, December 12, 1639.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWS THAT CHRIST WILL NOT TARRY WHEN ONCE HIS TIME IS COME, AND THE FOLLY OF SUCH WHOSE WORK IS THEN TO DO; AND THAT THE BLESSEDNESS OF SAINTS CONSISTS IN IMMEDIATE COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

Section I.

The coming of Christ, we have heard, is set forth first from the time of it, viz., just then when the foolish went to buy. Could not the Lord, so patient and long-suffering, tarry a little while longer for them? especially seeing they went not about any sinful work, but were using the means to get that grace now, which their vessels were empty of before? No, but the Lord deals with all men, especially that live under the means, as he did with these foolish virgins.

Observ. That as God is long-suffering towards men, while through ignorance of their spiritual wants and security of heart they have no heart to use the means for supply. So if once his time of forbearance be slept out, he will not tarry one moment longer, even when men are most diligent in the use of means for spiritual supplies; when Christ hath a heart to help, many people have none either to see their wants, or seek for help; when men have hearts thus to do, then Christ hath none, because his time of tarrying is out; when men are worst and most secure, Christ's door is open to them many times; when men are best and indeed awakened, Christ's heart and door is shut against them, as it was here; for what are the best endeavors of foolish virgins? what excellency is there in them, that the Lord of glory should stay their leisure, after long neglect of himself, and loss of precious time?

Section II.

Use. Be sure you sleep not out the day time of grace; especially you, —

1. That know you want oil in your vessels, and grace in your hearts, and mercy to your souls, and think, I would not die yet for a world.

2. You that, being asleep with these foolish virgins, dream you are rich and want nothing, and would be half offended with them that should tell you to your face, or but think in their hearts, that you have no grace, when indeed you are poor, and empty, and naked. Take heed that you give not that answer to time that tarries for you, and unto Christ that waits upon you, as Felix to Paul, "when his heart trembled to hear of judgment to come; I will speak with you at a more convenient season;" the Lord hath not left churches without the examples of the terror of Christ's patience in kind, who upon their beds of distress have lamented before men, O, my time is out; call time again, call time again; and who have besought it of God with tears, as he did the blessing, and cried out, What, Lord! wilt thou not give me one hour, one day more? and so, like men sinking, have catched hold on any thing to save them, while others have stood upon the shore lamenting of them, The Lord be merciful to them: this may be your case, that neither your tears nor blood can purchase a moment's time.

Look to it that your vessel be not found empty at the coming of the Lord; it is a dying time in this country, and the Lord hath taken away some, and those that were ready are gone in to the marriage. Consider of it, that faith, that grace which you think you have now, may prove but chaff and stubble when it comes to be tried in the fire of the Lord's coming; the best man will find all little enough; then be sure you miss not of it now. Do not think, I will pray, and seek then, and I hope to find, though thou art secure now; think of this point, When did Christ come and shut the door, but when the virgins went out to buy? but woe, woe to thy dead heart; some here present shall seek Christ, and not find him, but shall die in their sins; till arrows are in your hearts, you will not cry.

Section III.

Observ. 2. That after long profession of godliness, it is a piece of foolishness to have any thing then to do but to die, and so give welcome to the Lord Jesus. These virgins, when they

were to die, were then to buy; when they were to receive Christ, were then to seek for oil in their vessels, that so they might be ready to receive Christ; but of this hereafter.

Use 1. O, their sad condition that have all to seek yet!

Use 2. Be not ever seeking, never finding; but so seeking, as that when you die, you may say, "Come, Lord, I am ready!"

Section IV.

Secondly. This coming of Christ is set forth from the different entertainment of the virgins, and Christ's different carriage towards them.

1. For his entertainment to the wise virgins; that is set down to be an entering or admittance into marriage, fellowship, communion, and joy with the Lord Jesus; which is amplified, —

First. From the antecedent (not cause) of it; and that is their readiness.

Secondly. The consequent of this their communion, the door was shut.

That the last end and full blessedness of all the elect espoused here to Christ, it consists in immediate communion with Jesus Christ alone.

What becomes of these wise virgins? they enter into near communion and fellowship with the bridegroom Jesus Christ. What becomes of the souls of all the elect when they are separated from the body, and from this world? the spirit returns to God that gave it; so the soul returns to Christ that bought it. When this world shall be burnt up, what will become of the souls and bodies of the elect, when there shall be no more sun to shine, nor kingdom to rule, nor creatures to comfort? they shall ascend from the clouds up into the marriage chamber of the Son of God, and be forever with the Lord, and the Lord alone; and this is their blessedness, etc. Blessedness, yea, the last and only blessedness, even of heaven itself.

John xvii. 23, There are variety of creatures here, and in every one there is dropped some sweet; "but the Lord's end is to make his people perfect in one;" how is that? God in Christ communicated all his goodness to his Son, and so living in him, then Christ communicates all his own and Father's love and goodness unto them, and so lives in them, and now they are in him, and so "made perfect in one;" as those that are thirsty for a time, are refreshed with some drops, or waters running in their channels; at last they come to the well-head, where they partake of all together.

1 Thess. v. 10, "This is the end of Christ's death, that we might live together with him;" not live only from him, but "live with him," and together "with him;" in beginnings here, hereafter fully.

Section V.

Reason 1. Because God the Father hath laid up all his glory most abundantly in Christ. Col. ii. 3, "Treasures of wisdom;" it shines in the face of Christ. 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6, And all our glory also. Luke ii. 32, Glory of his people Israel. Ps. xxix. 19, "In his temple he uttereth all his glory;" in the world, there it sparkles in every creature, and the heavens declare it; but there is but some, and that common to all tongues and languages; but in this temple, the Lord Jesus especially, there all the Father's glory is uttered, and himself doth utter it. Treasures are such things where there are —

1. Precious things.
2. Abundance of them.
3. Hidden, not open to all.
4. They are sure and safe there, for their owners to take and enrich themselves withal; so it is in Christ, there is, first, precious things; all God's preciousness, and all our precious things; our life, our peace, our joy, our strength, etc.; and secondly, abundance of them; thirdly, hid from the world, and unknown in part to the saints; fourthly, but sure there for their owners, and Christ is the treasure of all these treasures, which are as infinite as God himself is; now, if all our glory, and the glory of God, be in Christ, then as privation of, and separation from, this glory is the last and only misery, so conjunction to, and communion with, and fruition of, this glory must be the last and great happiness of the elect. I would convince any carnal heart by this argument: Didst thou ever find any comfort from any creature? that comfort is not from it, but from the Lord by it; for creatures are but as cold water, all their warmth is from the fire; now, there is but a little of the sweetness of God, because creatures can hold but little, it is so narrow a vessel; but in the Lord Jesus all the goodness of God is gathered together there, which is scattered in several creatures here; nay, not finite, but infinite goodness and glory; therefore this is our blessedness.

Reason 2. In regard of God the Father's exceeding great love, and the purpose of God to manifest it to the sons of men; this is the nature of love: when one is in a blessed condition himself, he will labor to bring those it loves to that condition; now, the blessedness of God lies in fellowship with his Son. Prov. viii. 30

Now, God the Father loves them dearly, and would have all the world to know that he doth so, and hence brings them at last into the same fellowship with himself in his Son, (John xvii. 23,) "That the world may know thou hast loved me;" the Father, out of his infinite love, communicates himself to Christ, and his fellowship is with the Father; all know this is a dear love; in the mean while love to his saints is unknown; they and the wicked share all alike; and the saints have the least portion and worst part many times, so that men can not see by any outward thing any more love to them than unto others; the time will come that they shall be made perfect in one, as near the Lord as can be, that the world may know this love, etc.

When Absalom had slain his brother, and fled from his father, it is said, (2 Sam. xiii. 39,) "that the soul of David longed, or was consumed to go forth to him;" David might have said, I will never look after him more; so might the Lord have said to us; or if he loved, he might never have manifested it, (as David;) but the Lord must show his love, etc.

Reason 3. Because this is the end of all the prayers and endeavors, and all the workings of the saints in this world. Suppose all glory be in Christ; let a thing be never so good, but if a man hath no desires after it, hath no mind to it, it would not be blessedness to him; but this is the end of all the prayers, duties of the saints, if at last "they may be with the Lord," (Phil. iii. 8, 9; John iv. 14,) "He shall never thirst; their desires are taken off from other things;" but only their hearts are to this. If there be any pillow the Lord lets them sleep upon in this world, they shall find it hard at last, and arise with a king's head and heart, and say, O, here is not my rest; the best entertainment this world can give hath ever somewhat mixed with it that makes the people of God say, "O that I might be with the Lord!"

Section VI.

Quest. Shall not the happiness of the saints partly lie in fellowship with the saints?

Ans. 1. True; but this is but a consequent to the former; as separation from God is the substance of misery in hell, but other things follow upon it, viz., communion with reprobates and devils; so here we have first communion with Christ; here is the substance of our blessedness; then this is accidental, and follows upon that, viz., the communion with the saints, which is exceeding sweet.

2. That good we shall have in communion with saints is not

from themselves, but Christ in them; as, (2 Thess. i. 10,) "Christ shall be admired in all his saints;" so Christ shall then in his saints and angels; it is the light of the sun that shines in the stars, and they shall do nothing but set out the praises of Christ.

Quest. But what blessedness is there in this, seeing it is in one thing only? when a man is sick or poor, can grace refresh him? can he live by that? (thus many carnal hearts think.)

Ans. 1. The Lord shall then take away all fleshly appetites or desires; for then our bodies shall be spiritual bodies; in this life sometimes God takes away the stomach, when he takes away food. Christ forgot his weariness, because he had other bread to eat.

2. It is therefore blessedness, because it is in one; there is,—

First. Trouble in seeking and fetching our comfort out of many things.

2. Unsatisfiedness, because one thing can give no more than it hath; now all things in this thing are there together; the sweet of all creatures, all ordinances, nay, variety of unknown mercies, (Prov. viii. 21,) shall center here in Christ Jesus.

Section VII.

Use 1. Of marvelous consolation to the saints of God. Now you have many wants, many sorrows, many temptations, many sins, many cares and fears of livelihood; but the time will shortly come when you shall be with the Lord, alone in communion with him, and so out of the crowd and press of troubles, and temptations, and sins, and evils in this world; that as he himself is above all these, so shall you. John xiv. 1–3. Their hearts were grieved for the loss of Christ. "I will come to you, and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also:" sometimes outward losses and fears trouble thee; sometimes absence of Christ from thee troubles thee: hear what the Lord saith, "Let not your hearts be troubled; for the Lord will take you to himself again." John xvi. 22. Christ tells them, "I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice;" what if he had said, I will come down from heaven to you again? I tell you, the Lord will do so to you, but that he is in a better place preparing it for you, and doing better things for you; but he sees you for the present, and you shall be with him at last.

The apostle prays that they might know "what is the inheritance of the saints;" so I desire of the Lord for you, that you may know what it is to have communion with Christ alone; O, see your blessedness, etc.

Section VIII.

1. This communion it shall be by sight, not chiefly by faith, as it is in this world. Many go many miles to the supposed sepulcher of Christ, and account their time, though superstitiously, yet happily spent. O, but what will it be to see the Lord himself, not as he was here in his abasement, but in all his glory, brighter than ten thousand suns! now we see (1 Cor. xiii.) "as in a glass," where we see the glory of God in the face of Christ; but then we shall know as we are known; as a child knows not the father, but at ripe years it doth; but as Philip said to Nathanael, who said, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" so can any such mercy come from heaven? come and see him of whom all the prophets have spoken; so then the Father and Spirit, and saints and angels, will say, O, come in and see him of whom all the prophets have written; come and behold him that hath shed his dearest blood for thee, that hath taken thought and care for thee night and day; that hath been all thy life interceding for thee; (Rev. xxii. 4,) "There you shall see his face."

2. This communion it shall be spiritual and inward with the soul and conscience. Suppose the soul should be with Christ, and not have spiritual communion with him, what were it the better? as many had when Christ was here in this world, that ate and drank in his presence, and yet are now shut out. O, no! the glory, beauty, goodness of Christ is not to be seen with bodily eyes, nor tasted, nor handled with our carcasses; and hence angels, though in heaven with Christ's person, yet look to the gospel, to hear, see, and enjoy the spiritual excellencies of the Lord; hence Simeon, when he had Christ in his arms, yet now desires to depart, because he should then come near him into his spiritual communion. O, this the soul shall have, inward light, love, peace, etc.: it is Christ's great love to live with the soul; but so to live with them that are his own, as to live in them. O, this is exceeding love, for Christ to live in one that was a dunghill. It comforted the disciples when he went away; "I will send you the Comforter:" O, but what a blessedness will this be, to be with him, and the Comforter in us also!

3. It shall be a full and perfect communion, communicating himself out to the utmost extent of the capacities of his people; for here we have spiritual communion, but we see but little, and know little, and receive but little, the first fruits and tastes of what we shall drink; but there fully; (2 Thess. i. 9,) "They shall be separate from the Lord and glory of his power," i. e.,

as much as ever the Lord is able to fill or load the soul withal; a crown of glory as weighty as ever it can bear, it wraps up the heart sometimes; the soul lies down confounded before the Lord; O that ever the Lord should here look upon such a one so vile! much more then shall there be wonderment; he will set open all his treasury; "O, come, take thy fill of love!" there he shall pour out all his heart, etc.

4. It shall be an exceeding familiar communion. When Christ was here on the earth, we know how familiar he was with his poor disciples; how one leaned on his breast, could come to him, speak to him, etc.: (O brethren!) much more shall it be then; (John xxi. 17,) "Touch me not; I am not ascended;" as if he should say, O, then there shall be sweet embracings, as Joseph, "that wept over the neck of Benjamin." O, the spiritual embracings there! the Lord and Christ will say, "I love thee dearly."

5. It shall be an everlasting, uninterrupted communion. We have here communion with other creatures, but they as passengers will leave us; we have also communion with Christ, but it is interrupted, many clouds come between us and him; but then it shall be everlasting, without any interruption. 1 Thess. iv. *ult.*, "We shall ever be with the Lord;" hence comes comfort: infinite is the glory of the Lord; we can not see it nor enjoy it in a short time; we have no leisure here, nor time enough to see it; hence we shall be to all eternity beholding and enjoying of it.

6. A joyful and most sweet communion, (Ps. xvi. *ult.*,) "filling the heart with unspeakable peace; believing ye rejoice with joy full of glory;" much more than feeling. And three things make it so.

Section IX.

First. It will be after many troubles, labors, and conflicts here in this world; there is not a goodly heart but hath his burden, if not of misery, yet of sin; if not from flesh and blood, yet from hell; and he fears also (it may be) that he shall never come to heaven; now whence this communion must be the more joyful, as Jacob thought that he should never see Joseph, and as (Is. ix. 2, 3) "those that divide the spoils, and reap the harvest; then there shall be an answer to all thy doubts," etc.

Secondly. It will be thus because this communion shall be chiefly in sucking out the sweet of all God's love, past, present, and to come. Eph. iv. 9; Ps. xxiv. 26. Love from a friend is sweet, but from a God sweeter; it doth us good to think of their love, their honor, and respect to us, much more the Lord's: O,

this "will like wine cheer the heart," that as the damned shall suck the fierce wrath of God, O, it shall sting them; so this *e contra*, we shall see all his bowels open.

Thirdly. "The Lord Christ himself shall rejoice over the soul, and so all saints with him." Luke x. 21. And the soul shall see this, and all saints rejoice in its communion. O, consider this, and comfort your hearts with this, all ye people of the Lord! I only say as Joseph, dying, "God will surely visit you when I am dead." Gen. *ult.* 24. So when thou art dying, the Lord will surely visit thee with his presence, and you shall surely be with him. You have been praying for this and hearing, and now and then you taste a little, but think it is too good to be true; yet if Christ be blessed, thou shalt at last, thou shalt not miss (though thou find but little of him here, and walk in the dark) of being with him forever; God hides his face from some of you, and you mourn, though the world rejoiceth; but happy art thou, for "thy mourning shall be turned into joy."

Section X.

Use 2. To mourn for our strangeness now to Jesus Christ, and our distances from the Lord Jesus; may not the Lord take up that speech as to Philip, "Have I been so long with thee, and hast thou not known me?" So hath Christ been so long with thee, and shalt thou be forever with him, and yet dost not know him?

There are five things that are ever conjoined with a near communion with Christ.

First. Knowledge of him; alas! how little do we conceive of the Lord!

Secondly. Persuasion of his love and faithfulness; alas! we have little assurance of him. Ps. ix.

Thirdly. Love to his fellowship; and the more in it the soul is, the more desirous it is of it: O, but the weariness of being with him that we have! no oftener are we with him now than needs must, but hereafter it shall be otherwise.

Fourthly. Likeness to him in his virtues, as Moses comes shining down; a man imitates them whose fellowship he loves in all their imitable excellencies. Alas! how unlike to him now are we, to what shall be!

Fifthly. A daily opening of and bemoaning daily evils to him; O, it easeth the heart; if a man is gone from his friend, yet troubles will fetch him in again; but we pour not out our souls thus to him; hence he pours not out his blood into our souls to

heal us; O, may we not take up that complaint of Agur, (Prov. xxx.,) that "we are more foolish than any man"? speaking of Christ; O, therefore, mourn for it; "David, when God hid his face for a little time, was troubled."

It was the complaint of the prophet of evil men, "that in their eyes he was rejected and despised, and we hide our faces from him." Let the world do so, will you do so also? it should not trouble so much that he hides his face from you, as that you have from him.

When David turned aside to Bathsheba, the prophet comes and tells him, "I anointed thee king, and delivered thee out of the hands of Saul, and gave thee thy master's wives, and more also; now, wherefore hast thou despised the Lord? the sword shall not depart;" O, (saith he,) "I have sinned against the Lord;" so say I to you: if the Lord had never made known himself to thee, it had been another matter; but "the Lord hath delivered thy soul from hell, thy eyes from tears;" the Lord hath anointed thee to partake of the glory of Christ, the Lord hath given himself to thee, and saith, Suck my blood, take my life, and more I would have given; and hast thou looked after Bathsheba, other lovers, and "despise the Lord"? O, say, "I have sinned," and mourn for it. 2 Sam. xii. 9.

There are two evils in this: 1. "Forsaking thy own good, nay, blessedness," (Jonah ii. 8,) own mercies.

2. "It is despising the Lord and his fellowship for other things," base things; that whereas you shall be forever beholding of him hereafter, yet you should proclaim him not to be worth looking on now.

Object. But I would have fellowship with the Lord, and he will not.

Ans. First. Never did any desire thy fellowship so much as the Lord when he wants it.

Secondly. Not love it, and glad of it when he had it.

Thirdly. Nor mourn and lament more when he wants it, as Jer. ii. 2, 5. God pleads for it.

Fourthly. He calls to the heavens. Jer. ii. 10, 11, "Did ever nation deal thus with idols!" If this will not break thine heart for strangeness, I know not what will do it: it is your sin that breaks off communion, not the Lord's unwillingness.

Section XI.

Use 3. Hence see the great worth and excellency of Jesus Christ; and learn hence to esteem aright of him; there is no

blessedness in the fruition of all the creatures together; good there is, but not blessedness; or if there were, yet it lies in many things; no one thing, nor twenty blessings, can make blessed; and it is but a broken blessedness in divers pieces; or if there were a kind of blessedness to be found in one, yet it is not a lasting blessedness, it is so but for a time, and so the loss of it at last will trouble us more than the having of it for a time.

But as he saith, "In him is light, and no darkness;" blessedness, and no misery; peace, and no trouble; fullness, and no want; beauty, glory, and no blemish; life, and no death; pure, dear, infinite love, and no anger; and it is in him alone; (Ps. cxlviii. 13,) "His name alone is excellent;" all our glory and the glory of God also is met together in him, all things in one thing; whatever good there is in other things, it is borrowed from him; base, beggarly things; but the fullness and plenty of all is in the Lord, so that we shall not need to cumber ourselves about unnecessary things; we need not a candle when the sun shines: and our last blessedness is here; when every thing else will make them wings to hasten from us, this will continue and last: when all our vessels we are tossed in here are sunk, and where our entertainment hath been very good, yet the shore sinks not, it is above overwhelmings, here alone we are safe.

However, the world sees not this, because their blessedness lies in preserving themselves by creatures, from feeling that misery which lies upon them now, as also because they shall never share in it, yet the saints have been exceedingly taken with this, that "David accounted them blessed that might dwell in his courts" in this world; Solomon was blessed that might but wait at wisdom's gates, and so be ready to be received when they be opened: "Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day afar off; Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ great riches;" what did he then esteem of the presence of Christ here! but what in glory!

Think of this, you that say you can not find in your hearts to esteem of the Lord Jesus; especially let him be precious to you, you espoused of the Lord; for others may say he is precious, but I shall never enter into this fellowship. No, no, but you shall; but he will take you to fellowship with himself: it was a great favor to Moses, (Exod. xxiv. 1, 2,) when others might come toward the Lord, yet Moses alone might only come near; "and he was in the mount alone with God;" so that the Lord should let others come toward him; but that you alone, above many thousands in the world, may be suffered to draw near to him, this should make the Lord dear to you at least. Lev. xiii. 46,

"The leper was to dwell alone without:" the Lord might have dealt so with thee; but when thou wert vile indeed, and most vile, nay, when thou didst separate thyself from thyself, then for the Lord to come near thee, and (as if thou couldst never be near enough) to manifest himself alone to thee forever in glory! When David found out Mephibosheth, saith he, "What, am I a dead dog, that I should sit at the king's table!" 2 Sam. ix. 7, 8. It was a great favor to Christ himself, that when rejected of men, yet that he was chosen of God and precious, and taken up to him: it may be thou thinkest thyself unworthy of the fellowship of any man, and men do or men may reject thee, yet for the Lord now to receive thee it is much; but whereas thou wert not only rejected of men, but of God also, (Is. liv. 6,) now for Christ to take thee to him; that as he lies in the Father's bosom, because thou couldst not for sin immediately lie there, he should lay thee in his bosom, and say, "Father, love this soul as thou hast loved me:" besides, the Father took Christ because he had worth; but for Christ to take thee when thou hadst no worthiness! for one to take dross and prize it when others cast it away, it is much: it is no wonder if pearls be so esteemed of, but for dirt to be prized! O, therefore, let the Lord be precious, and his fellowship precious to thee, seeing thou and thy fellowship is so to him.

Object. But I can not believe it. Why should the Lord do so?

Ans. It is hard to believe it when we look upon our own vileness; but consider the reason why the Lord doth this: it is not because he loves any for fleshly respects, as we do; but, —

First. Because of his own grace and glory; the believer is infinitely beloved of him, without moving him thereunto; and hence if his grace be exceeding dear to him, and his glory dear to him, thou art so to him.

Secondly. Christ loves not first because men are holy, but that he may make them so.

Thirdly. He loves because the Father loves them.

Section XII.

Hence learn to be content with the Lord alone; (Heb. iv. 9,) "There is a rest;" hence labor to enter into it; so if he will have rest and blessedness hereafter, that you shall be content and forever glad in him and with him alone, O, labor to possess this blessedness now. You are in your worst condition now, your best is behind; shall the blessedness of thy best condition not be blessedness in thy worst condition unto thee? shall that which

satisfies thy soul in heaven not satisfy thy soul here? Moses (Deut. xxxii. 10) reckons this as the happiness of Israel, viz., "that God alone did lead them when they were in a wilderness," a land of drought, and pits and wants, and the shadow of death; so Christ now.

Solomon reckons it as one part of his folly, madness, and vanity, when he forsook the Lord in his degenerate condition, (Eccl. ii. 3,) "that he gave up his heart to vanity, and to wisdom also;" as if that was not sufficient alone.

Men are not contented with the Lord alone; Solomon, as you heard, was gone, whom God appeared twice unto; David's heart was sorely assaulted, (Ps. lxxiii.,) until he went into the sanctuary of God, and then saith he, "Whom have I in earth but thee?" but as for others, they are far from this; and hence come the many murmurings and sinkings of heart; why do not men sink and drown? because they are not in the ark or ship, and stay there alone; so it is here, (Ps. xvi. 4,) "Their sorrows are multiplied," etc.

Section XIII.

Labor for this contentedness in spirit, in four cases especially, wherein the heart is apt to withdraw from the Lord.

First. In case the Lord takes away the dearest, nay, all outward blessings from us; men can rub it out with quietness of spirit, when some of their money loose in their pocket is lost; but when their jewels are lost, their dearest blessings singled out, wife, husband, children, then, as Jonah, the soul is almost angry with God, "when his gourd is smitten;" (1 Thess. iv. 13,) "without hopes;" again some can rub this out till they come to part with all; when some of our boughs are cut, and branches lopped, we can be content; but to have our top boughs cut off, and to strike at the root too, that we should remain as withered, dry trees, this can hardly be borne. Men can be content to follow Christ, if they may carry something on their backs beside the cross; some can endure any thing but poverty, because covetous; others any thing but disgrace, because proud; if something or many things be cast overboard in a storm, men can be sometimes contented therewith, if something escapes; but when there is a wreck of all, now to be content is as hard as to walk upon the waters. Israel, when they be fed and led by God, all was still; but when they want bread and water, then they murmur, and also question, (Exod. xvii. 7,) "Is God among us now?" And truly it would break one's heart to see what sinkings of

heart there be among us, (the fruits of extreme pride and Christlessness,) and what vexations men are to themselves, that men are become devils to themselves, their own tormentors; what cares, fears, griefs, losses, decays, that their heads are dawled, and their memories lost, and their hearts sunk, and their countenances altered, and the ordinances comfortless, and themselves heartless, and pining away in their iniquities, because of outward sorrows: O, consider, either thou shalt shortly be with the Lord, or not; if not, there is cause of mourning: O, to go home and see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in God's kingdom, and thyself shut out, it were a lamentable thing indeed; but if it be otherwise with thee, O, consider thou shalt be happy enough without these things in heaven; and therefore, though these things be lost, thou shalt not lose one jot of thy happiness. A man that is blessed with blessedness itself, and yet sunk, either should say, Christ is not blessedness, or else recover.

Object. O, but though I have lost my estate, yet that doth not so much trouble me as to have lost friends and their love.

Ans. And what if thou hast lost thy life, and thy body were rent from thy soul, if that goes to the Lord? Heb. xi., "They were sawn asunder." It may be thy heart hath gone from Christ; O, therefore return; for it may be this is God's end, and methinks this should make you content with any cross, thou art not near enough to the Lord; O, therefore, you poor saints, be not in heaviness by many temptations; the Lord doth it to try your faith; can you be content with him alone? It was Justin Martyr's speech, "Nothing else to care for."

Secondly. In case the Lord makes outward peace and blessings to abound upon you, set not now your hearts upon these things; sometimes, when miseries abound, and there are wrecks of all, now the soul is glad to stand upon the rock to save its life; (Ps. lxxviii. 35,) "When he smote them, they then remembered God was their rock;" but when the Lord begins to fill the soul with outward blessings, it is then exceeding hard not to lodge them in the Lord's own room and habitation for himself, and "the Lord is forgotten and forsaken also." Jer. ii. 1–5.

But when these things are removed, or with you continued, yet let your hearts still be kept for the Lord; for if these things were necessary, you should have them in heaven; but there is no need of them there, but only of the Lord. Ps. xvii. *ult.* It was David's prayer that "he might be delivered from the men who had their portion in this world; but I shall behold thy face, and therewith be satisfied when I awake;" i. e., some

outward troubles now made him heavy, that he slept the sleep of death, saith Calvin, but then he should be satisfied; it was David's argument to prove his faith, (Ps. xvi.,) "The Lord is the portion of my lot and cup;" not his crown nor kingdom; (1 Cor. vii. 30,) Paul mixes this with his counsels, "Use the world as if you used it not, possess as if you possessed it not, for the fashion of it passeth away." The love of Christ sweetens these things; nay, the sweet of them is Christ's; he lets into them his love and his sweetness, etc. O, the peace that comes by this means, when as no outward evil detracts, and no outward good thing adds to your blessedness! It is so in itself; O that it were so indeed unto you! Ps. xxiii.

Thirdly. In case the soul comforts itself in hopes and desires after good things to come in this world; for sometimes that which fills the heart is not things present; a man finds a bottom here, but he looks for things to come, and so launcheth out his heart in the deep, lets the reins of his heart go strongly after things to come, and so the Lord alone doth not quiet him; many men's blessedness here is imaginary, and chiefly because of that which is to come.

O, consider, when it will be found to be blessedness to enjoy the Lord alone, without hope or desire of any good else to come, thy soul shall say, "Let me ever see and love this God, and none else." It was the sweet affection of Paul, "I desire much to be with Christ;" he did not desire these things, no, not body, not life; nothing else but to be with him; and that not faintly, but earnestly, (2 Cor. v. 1,) because "he was now absent from the Lord;" O, the sinful lusts of men! men think themselves miserable if they be not satisfied; and they are not satisfied because Christ is not enough alone. O, but know it, he will be so shortly, soul-satisfying blessedness to his people. And this I add, the way to have all desires satisfied is to joy in Christ alone. Ps. xxxvii. 5.

Fourthly. In case of all spiritual wants; for this troubles the heart above any other thing; thou sayest thou hast such wants and such sins; O, but remember this, thou shalt have thy fill of him hereafter; he is absent now, but thou shalt be with him; he hides his face now, but he will arise upon thee, and never set more, and will supply all thy wants. Thus the apostle persuades to love the Scriptures, though they give but a little light, and they were in darkness until this daystar arose; so then all darkness shall be abolished; so the saints complain. If a son, why so unlike Christ? yet remember, "When he appears we shall be like him." 1 John iii. 2; Col. i. 3.

Object. But these things are to come; how can I be content now?

Ans. 1. Carnal hearts feed themselves chiefly with hopes, and false hopes of base things to come; why will not you now with this? Rom. v. 2, 3, "We rejoice in hope, and live by hope."

2. Faith makes things absent present; (Heb. xi. 13,) "They saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded, and embraced them;" so do you, and the Lord in them here; but the fruition and possession of those things promised is more.

3. Though there is not perfect and full fruition of the Lord here, yet it is in part here, which gives unknown sweetness; (Rev. xxi. 23,) "They need not the sun, but the Lamb is the light of that temple." Ps. xxiii. *ult.*

4. What though the Lord keeps thee short, yet for his sake be content while he keeps thee in want; there is not a cross but the Lord saith, For my sake bear it; nor a denial of any mercy, nor a putting by any prayer, but Christ saith, For my sake be content with it, as they, Ps. xliv. 22, and be content a little while; glory is not yet ready for thee, nor thou for it; now let this prevail with you; be content to be afflicted, buffeted, forsaken; quieting the heart with this, "I shall one day be with the Lord;" Christ was thus for thee.

And as for you that never had heart to receive Christ yet, O that this thing might make your hearts come off from all creatures to him! (Is. lv. 3,) "Why spend you your money for no bread, and for that which satisfies not," and for that which continues not? what though you lose, by parting with your lusts, all comforts, friends, favor of men, gain? thou shalt find all these in him; lose him, and thou canst not find these in them: O, but this you will not come to; but yet remember, (Ps. lxxxi. 11; Heb. v. 9,) and therefore is there any soul here that, as Hannah was praying for a child, so you for Christ alone? I offer thee Christ; in the name of the Lord take him; thou canst not exalt Christ more by any act than by taking him; and therefore, as hers, so let thy heart go home quieted, mourn no more, and let it ever bear up thy heart, as the ark above all waters, that thou art shipped safe in him.

Section XIV.

Use 5. O, therefore, be as near the Lord Jesus now as you can be in this world; be as much alone with him as you can; there will be a very near conjunction and communion between you and Christ another day; and herein alone lies your blessed-

ness; you are yet in your race, and absent from home; yet be as near home, and "reaching after the prize of your high calling;" when David could not come to the temple, yet his heart was as near it as it could; he would be coming after it, and accounting them happy that might be near, even the very swallows. That is the nature of love, where it can not go it will creep; it will be as near the thing beloved as it can: so here.

The saints, when they were cast from the temple, when they could not go to it, yet they would look toward and pray toward it; Daniel did it though he died for it; Jonah, though discouraged, and though he should never come there, but be cast out of God's sight.

Jacob and Joseph, though they might have had honorable burial elsewhere, yet such was not only their faith in the promise, but their love to the land of promise, where they knew God intended his presence, that their very bones must lie there, (Heb. xi. 22,) when they could not live there, their very carcasses shall lie there.

This was the power of the timorous faith of Joseph and Nicodemus, (when they had lost the life of Christ, and Christ was departed,) yet they loved and begged the dead body of Jesus; so though you have neglected the Lord, yet now be as near the Lord as you can; Christ himself, when he was to depart from his people, yet he would be as near to his as he could; hence he sends the comforter; O, so be you toward him! I know his love to us exceeds ours to him; but there is no reason why it should, for we are vile; there is reason ours should exceed, for he is worthy; this is the honor of the saints, "to be a people near to him;" as it is the curse, and shame, and misery of all the world to be far from him.

Men's hearts lie farther out from Christ than we are aware of; some stars seem to be within a hand's breadth of the moon, when they are indeed far off, because of our weakness not able to judge of things at that distance; so it is with many; nay, many of God's own people are far off, or not near enough to the Lord. And hence come,—

First. All afflictions for the most part; why are they sent but to fetch you in from your strayings? hence, (Ps. xxiii. 4,) "the rod of God comforted David."

Secondly. Hence comes your sleeping in your strayings from God, as Jonah that went away from the presence of the Lord, and the Lord let him alone for a time; I know there are daily strayings; but to lie and live in them not lamented, this argues your hearts are gone, and lie out from the Lord, at least for a time.

Section XV.

Quest. How should we be near unto the Lord?

Ans. In four particulars.

First. Be near to him in his providences; the Lord is exceeding near to all men, thus; (Acts xvii. 27, 28,) "in him we live and move," as the beam is in the sun, so as he may be felt: it is wonderful to think how near the Lord is to men, not only by the immediateness of his virtue, but of his person; yet they are far from the Lord, and men are to seek for him; hence (ver. 30, 31,) he persuades unto that, especially to be near God, not only as a Creator, but as a Mediator, by whom the affairs of all the family in heaven and earth are ordered.

O, therefore, seek him till you come so near as to see him and find him here: David saw this really, and that in times of peace, when he had fat pastures and full cups; (Ps. xxiii.,) he saw the Lord as his shepherd, (John x. 1,) who is known of his, feeding, leading, restoring, comforting by rods, adhering to him "in the valley of the shadow of death;" and then for outward things, furnishing his table, anointing his head, giving necessities and superfluities; he looked not only on second causes, but saw God as really doing all these, as carnal men see second causes doing these: nay, he so sees the Lord, as that he falls a wondering: and indeed the Lord is never seen in his providences till then; as Manoah "saw the angel do wondrously," (Judg. xiii. 19;) (Ps. cxxxix. 14,) "Marvelous are thy works;" (ver. 17, 18,) "How precious are thy thoughts!" he saw from the Lord's works, and gathered an idea of the thoughts of God; so should we; and hence "when he did awake, he was still with the Lord;" the first thing that appeared was the Lord. Ps. lxxiii. 23–25.

To the beasts the Lord is near, but they can not reflect upon their own actions, much less upon the Lord; the heathens may see we are God's offspring, and see God as a Creator at some times; but let them that profess Christ see and find out Christ as Mediator; as Moses that desired to see the Lord passing by him, whom he had seen a little before; truly the Lord not only passeth by you, but is with you, proclaiming his name by the voice of his providence toward you, patience, pity, love, truth, wisdom; and yet truly this is very difficult and hard to see.

Section XVI.

Men see not Jesus Christ. *First.* Because second causes seem to work all; this estate my friends gave me, or my labor got

me; this house the carpenter built for me; these provisions my money bought for me; and so the creatures, like broad leaves, hide the boughs of the glory of the God in Christ on which they grow, and are opaque and dense, and not transparent, through which the soul may see the glory of God abroad.

Secondly. Because men have so many businesses and cares that they can not have leisure really to see the Lord.

Thirdly. Because there is a malice in all men's hearts, naturally, which suffocates all that which may be known of him; (Rom. i. 28,) "They delighted not to retain God in their knowledge;" the works of God grow vile and sordid through their commonness to them.

Fourthly. Because men can live well enough without him; hence like a child at nurse, that forgets friends and home because it is well enough without them; thus men's minds are not fed with the thoughts of him. Jer. ii. 6.

Fifthly. Because nature never heard of a mediator governing all their lives, and comforts, and all; they see not all given them by the almighty hand of Christ, "who hath all power given him in heaven and earth," and who must reign not only over friends till they all are gathered, but over his enemies also till they are subdued; and to question this is to question Christ's sitting at God's right hand. He is owner of all, and disposer of all to the least growth of thy stature, and the most careless fall of the least hair; to do not only the greatest but the meanest offices of love for thee.

You say indeed you believe all is from Christ; O, but you see it not; come near therefore and see the Lord; (Deut. viii. 9,) they were forty years a-learning that man lives not by bread, nor is warmed by clothes, etc., and though they had marvelous wondrous works, yet (Deut. xxix.) "to this day the Lord hath not given you eyes to see."

O, therefore, labor to see who it is that nurses you, guides you, tends you, leads you, teacheth you, lays you down, and takes you up, and lets the works of Christ raise up your minds to the thoughts of Christ in heaven, remembering thee in his kingdom of glory, who might forget thee; and the poorer and smaller the mercy is, the more do thou wonder that he should therein be a servant unto thee; see all blessings growing upon this tree, seated in the midst of God's paradise, (Rev. xxii. 3, 4,) though thou layest thy head with Jacob upon stones and sorrows, yet see this ladder of the Lord's providence toward thee; common blessings sometimes descending, sometimes taken out of thy hand and ascending, and the angels of God with thee,

ministering to thee; but the Lord at the top of them; the Lord his care, his love, in all; and let not this be a dream, but a reality to you. It is a wonderful sin to be thus unmindful of Christ.

1. Because hence all whoring from Christ ariseth, (Hos. ii. 8; Judg. ii. 12,) especially in times of peace.

2. Hence the Lord is forced to hedge your way with thorns, and to bring you to extremity of troubles, that you may see the Lord, (Is. xli. 17, 18,) nay, sometime to bring ruin. Is. v. 12, 13.

And truly, as it is a great sin, so it is a very great shame; (Is. i. 2,) "The ox knows his owner;" is the Lord the owner of you, and do you not know him, when he comes by you, and to you, provides for you? It is a worse thing, saith Chrysostom, to be compared to a beast than to be so. To let many days and streams of goodness pass by you, and yet not to take any notice, and still to be so far from the Lord; I know in heaven this is perfected, and then comes acknowledgment of the Son of God; but here you may be near him; I think unless the Lord did descend in cloudy pillars, and of fire, some men would never see him.

Section XVII.

Secondly. Be near him in his promises; for Christ is near to us here also; (Rom. x. 8,) "The word of faith is nigh thee; so that you need not ascend to bring Christ down from heaven," etc. When parents are dead and gone, children will then search out their last will and testament, and preserve that, and keep that near them.

Christ draws near to his people, 1. In his promises, according to his thoughts of them.

2. In his performances, joining the soul immediately to himself, and filling it with himself: this we can not enjoy yet; the Lord lays it up in his promise, which they have in lieu of the performance. O, draw near not to words and syllables, but to the Lord there, apprehend him there; as it is with the attributes of God, his glory can not be comprehended by us; hence he manifests himself there according to our capacity, God manifesting himself severally; so in promises we can not comprehend Christ as yet; hence Christ manifests himself in his glory, in several promises; O, embrace him there. Heb. xi. 6. It is not said that "Abraham and Jacob were heirs of Canaan," but "heirs of the promise," and "Sarah first received her son in the promise;" so do you embrace Christ in the womb and bowels of

the promises: we live by faith in this life; and hence all our enjoyment of Christ is first in the promise.

First. Labor to draw near unto and enjoy the Lord Jesus by the promise.

Secondly. Labor to enjoy him in the promise.

First. By the promise or by means of it: all that which the Lord conveys to his is not by mere providence, but by promise. Ps. xxv. 10. He was free before their calling, but now he hath bound himself by an eternal covenant, to be all and do all for them, (Gen. xvii. 1,) so that the saints may and should bring all their empty pitchers to the wells of the promise, (Is. xii. 3,) "and draw out of those breasts," and get Christ Jesus' spirit in your hearts by them; now, some think the promise is not theirs, hence they go not thither for spiritual refreshments, or, at least, they let other things come by providence, especially common blessings, without going to the promise for their daily bread, or looking to the promise out of whose bowels they are begot: Heb. xiii. 5, 6, the apostle there sends them to the promise. Or else they use not the means, or faint in the use of it; whereby they come to enjoy the Lord by his promise, and that is restless wrestling with Christ by prayer for it; (Gen. xxxii. 12.) "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good;" he might have said, "I have a promise; what need I pray?" or he might have said, "I had a promise of safe convoy, but now I see the Lord is coming out to break it;" and so he might have perished: yet he prays, and wrestles, acknowledging himself unworthy of all the truth, etc. So Neh. i. 8. Men have so little of Christ because so little of the spirit of prayer, pressing God's promise; thou hast a barren, empty, weak heart, because the promise is not improved as it should be.

Secondly. Labor to enjoy him in the promise; sometimes the soul hath a promise fair, and seeks and finds not; now the heart goes on to seek, but is exceeding unbelieving, or sad and troubled while it doth not feel; and unthankful also, and accounts itself miserable while it wants, and so doth not glory in the Lord, and his fullness, which is his in the promise, unless he feels the good come from the promise; like a man that doth not account himself rich while he hath it in his treasure, a most safe and sure place where it is kept for him, unless he gets a little out of it into his pockets; and fears he shall be slain with thirst, though he stands by the spring and that be full, if his dish be empty; O, this is vile; (Heb. xi. 13.) "These received not the promise," i. e., things promised, yet saw them, believed, and embraced them, i. e., in the promise. You say you are sinful, and

borne down by your distempers, and base, and poor; I say you have power and victory over all sin and misery, and have eternal glory already in the promise; only here is thy wound, you think you want it because you have it not out of the promise, though you have it in the swaddling clouts of the promise lapped up there; and by means of this sinful distemper of heart you partake not of Christ, because you apprehend not your exceeding great riches in the promise; (2 Pet. i. 2; 2 Sam. xxiii. 4,) "God made an everlasting covenant," this is all his desire; sweet was David's spirit, (2 Sam. vii. 22,) "Who is like to thee," when he had no accomplishment of the promise; O, so do you say, (Heb. vi. 17,) "The Lord hath appointed we should have strong consolation; by promise and oath, not by dreams; it was the complaint of Christ, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe;" so you call in question, like Thomas, unless you feel; O, close with the promise, keep it as most precious; and then, (Ps. xxv. 10,) he saith not to them that keep their covenants or their feelings, but "his covenant as their portion," and get the Lord to undertake to keep it for them, and so make sure.

Section XVIII.

3. Labor to be near the Lord in all his ordinances also, both privately and publicly, for there is his presence, (Ezek. *ult. ult.*; Ps. xxvi. 8,) he not only loved Christ's presence, but the place where it was; it was an argument of his integrity, (Ps. cii. 13,) "They did love the dust of Sion;" never think there is a time of mercy till then.

First. Be with him in secret as oft as you can, prayer, meditation, daily calling your hearts to an account; time hath been that you have been so, when in affliction, or at first conversion; but now twenty hinderances; and now you can not only neglect, but think you have reason so to do; there have been tears, and prayers, and thoughts, and pressings hard after the Lord, but now no words, nor groans; you women have children to suck, and families to tend; you servants love your sleep rather than the bosom of Christ; and though conscience cry out against you for it, yet you hope to be better one day, and so you grow strangers to Christ, and no public ordinances profit, because private duties are neglected, and thy heart, like the sluggard's garden, is undressed; is this to be as near the Lord as you can? no, if the Lord loves you, look for the death of thy husband, wife, or child shortly; look for terrors, and then you shall account it an honor, if you may but once more speak to the Lord.

Secondly. Be with him and as near him as you can in all public ordinances, and not only to have them, (which some care not greatly for, because they see no glory in them, unless glorified souls should come out of heaven to be members, and Moses and Elias to build tabernacles here, and to be elders,) but come through them, look beyond them to the Lord; look at them as empty and weak, unless the Lord fill, and be powerful in them; David did enjoy God secretly, yet there was more in public; hence (Ps. lxiii. 2) the saints are a generation of seekers. Ps. lxiii., "My soul followeth hard after thee;" mercy and truth follows you many times when you forsake it, (Ps. xxiii. *ult.*,) much more when you cleave to it. Hezekiah's frame of heart (Is. xxxviii. *ult.*) is imitable. Acts i., Christ promised to send the Comforter; wait at Jerusalem, as there they did in prayer, and at last the Lord came.

You have forsaken all for ordinances; and now you have them; I confess they are mere outsides, yet the Lord is there; there is a glory which wise men can see in Christ in the manger.

Section XIX.

Fourthly. Labor by thy desires to be near him; (Rev. xxii. 20,) so desire "as to wait for thy change all thy life," look for it. 1 Thess. i. *ult.*

1. Christ's desire is that thou wert with him, when thou art ready, and when thy work is done; O, let this make thee to desire it also.

2. If you can not keep your hearts from vain hopes, and foolish and noisome lusts, without desiring him, do not then desire to be with him; for you may desire communion with lusts and Christ.

Object. But death is terrible, and separation from him bitter.

Ans. Long for him, therefore, to come and then take thee, and see thou desire nothing but him; rebuke thy unwillingness of not being with him. If Christ was on earth, you would hazard your lives to get unto him; much more herein.

Object. But what will become of God's name?

Ans. Let the Lord alone for that; while thou livest endeavor to the utmost; but it is appointed for thee a little season only to be here, and be willing the Lord should honor himself also by others as well as by thee.

Object. What will become of my wife and children?

Ans. Who regarded thee in thy blood? when thou livest, they are thine; but then the Lord's.

Desire to be with him; this will support your hearts in all your changes of this life.

Section XX.

Use 6. You that never received Christ, now do it.

Object. Yes, I have.

Ans. No; you have not so received him, as to let all go for him. Why so? because he alone will be blessedness, but he is not so to thee; O, therefore, let all go now; you must part with Christ, or all these things. Which will ye do? If with Christ, you can not find him in these things; but if you part with these things, then you shall find them all in him.

Object. But he will have none of me.

Ans. 1. He cries down thy laying out money for what is not bread.

2. He promises to give thee drink, now and hereafter.

CHAPTER XIX.

SHOWING THAT NONE SHALL ENJOY CHRIST HEREAFTER, BUT THOSE THAT ARE PREPARED HERE.

Ver. 10. *They that were ready.*

Section I.

Observ. Those only who are ready and prepared in this life for Christ, shall enjoy eternal and immediate communion with Christ; those only who are fitted shall partake of his fellowship; for of all these virgins (though many of them were otherwise very well qualified) only those which were ready did enter in with the bridegroom, which readiness in these wise virgins was not, nor is not, any Popish preparation, either meritorious, or congruous, or wrought by the power of corrupted or adorned nature; but divine and glorious, wrought by the power of Christ, out of his eternal love to the vessels of glory, as an antecedent, not moving cause of this eternal fellowship; it is the first degree of our resurrection with Christ. Rom. ix. 23, "Vessels of glory prepared unto glory;" the same word which is used here, there are two ends God hath appointed all men to; either to be vessels of wrath; who are those? verse 22, "Those that are fitted for destruction;" others of glory; who are those? "Prepared unto glory." 2 Cor. v. 5, with 8. How comes Paul and all the saints to know, and groan for to be out of the body, and to break the cage, and to be with the Lord? one reason is, they are wrought,

and moulded, and fashioned for that condition by the hand of a merciful God, even as one may know what vessels are for especial use, by their metal, and curious engravings upon them.

Section II.

Reason 1. Because all men's souls are naturally unfit and unprepared to enjoy communion with Christ; it is said, (Rev. xxi. *ult.*,) "Nothing enters into the new Jerusalem on earth, which is unclean, and defileth;" and, (Heb. xii. 14,) "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Now, naturally all men are defiled, and unclean vessels, and under the power of their sins, loathing angels' food, the grace of Christ, and weary of the fellowship of Christ; and, therefore, they must be prepared for the Lord first; this is one reason why preparation to every holy duty is needful, and so needful, that let men perform any holy duty, wherein they draw near to Christ without a heart prepared, (Ps. x. 17,) their performances are rejected, or not blessed; and hence Rehoboam, though he did maintain the worship of God at Jerusalem, "yet he prepared not his heart," (2 Chron. xii. 14;) and hence Hezekiah mourns, and begs pardon for this, "that he is so purified according to the purification of the sanctuary." Now, to a holy duty, and communion with Christ here, this is needful; sore eyes can not behold the sun without grief; sick bodies loathe the best food; if the Lord should let a carnal heart into heaven with that heart he hath, and not change his nature, he would not stay there if he could escape; but having his swinish nature, he would be in his mire again; and the government of Christ being a bondage to him, he would break bonds, and break his prison, if he knew where to fly from the presence of the Lord; and hence, no work so wearisome as Christ's now, no time so uncomfortable and tedious as abiding under Christ's wings in his ordinances now. 1 Cor. xv. 50, "If flesh and blood can not enter into the kingdom of heaven, much less corruption."

Reason 2. In regard of the rich grace and wisdom of his love toward his people; for who sees not, but that it is a curse to be unready as these foolish virgins, who were therefore shut out? O, therefore, it is grace and mercy to make ready, and indeed an answer to prayers, and a comfort against all fears of the saints, who are then desirous to be with the Lord when they are indeed ready; readiness for Christ doth not destroy grace, but being a fruit of God's grace, advanceth it. Rom. ix. 23, the apostle makes it the first fruit of glory, that the saints are "prepared unto glory;" glory of mercy is the end, preparedness thereto is

the means, or way leading to that end; if God appoints the end, his wisdom leads also first to the means which lead at last to the end; if out of his rich grace he appoints the end, out of the same grace, by this other, he leads to this end; and though you think it not now grace, you shall say it is so another day, when, with these foolish virgins, you shall say, "O that I were ready!" I know not almost which is greatest love, to prepare for glory, or to bring into the possession of it; to make a vessel of poisonous dross a vessel of gold, or when it is so, to fill it; for the Lord to look upon a man when he is in his blood, and then to wash him; when a man is as water spilt upon the ground, and a broken vessel of no use, now for the Lord to pity, and fit for use, it is exceeding rich grace.

Reason 3. In regard of the honor of the Lord Jesus, it was one part of the honor of Christ to have John go before him, and (Luke i. 17) "to prepare a people ready for the Lord." As it is part of a prince's honor to have his bride ready, and attired to welcome and entertain him, when he shall return to her, she owes this honor to him, and he expects this honor from her; so the Lord Jesus deserves this honor from all his people to be in readiness for him. Suppose these virgins had turned harlots, and gone a-whoring from him till his very coming, and then had been taken in, what might the world think? Doth he love the fellowship of harlots? for a man's heart to go a-whoring from the Lord, after the world, or lusts, to die so, is to disgrace the Lord Jesus; and hence (Phil. iii. 17 to the end) there are two sorts of men professing godliness; some mind "earthly things," others look and mind "a Saviour from heaven;" the one disgrace Christ, and are enemies to him; and hence Paul weeps for them; the other are his friends. And are princes so far respected as all things are ready for them? and is the Lord worthy of no such respect, so as that his people should be unready? No, know it as he said, (Mal. i.) "He is a great King."

The particulars wherein this readiness consists I have spoken of in the first part of the parable, and shall now only speak of them in the subsequent uses.

Section III.

Use 1. Of terror and astonishment of heart to all those that are wholly unready, that have no readiness at all to meet, or to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus; if those that are ready be received in, then those that be unready shall be shut out.

There is a number among us, young and old, of all sorts almost

among us, that swarm up and down towns, and woods, and fields, whose care and work hitherto hath been like bees, only to get honey to their own hive, only to live here comfortably with their houses, and lots, and victuals, and fine clothes, etc., but not to live hereafter eternally. Suppose the Lord should stop thy breath, and cut thee off, what would become of thee? I trust to God's mercy, I hope I should go to Christ, though I am not assured; but are you ready for Christ? Yes, I hope I am; O, poor wretch! why dost hope so? if thou never hadst one hour's serious thoughts, What will become of me? or, How shall I be ready? feeling thy unreadiness and unfitness thereunto. Or if thou hast had any thoughts, never wast possessed with any strong fears of eternity, and separation from the Lord Jesus, which hath damped thy mirth, and sunk thy heart, and perplexed thy thoughts, and made thee think with terror upon thy conscience, What will become of me? nor made thee desirous to ask others that question, as it is commonly one of the first, though but a common work, to think of dying presently: I have lived long without God and Christ in the world, and die I must shortly, and what will become of me then?

But you have slept quietly enough in the night, and sung care away and cast fear away in the day, and thy heart never had one hour's fit of shaking and trembling at eternity to come, when it is the nature of true fear ever to have the eye upon what it fears, till it is taken away; and if difficulty attend the same, to remove it; it can not be quiet, but will cry for help, if possibly help may be had; this you never did: no, thou never hadst so much as these foolish virgins, viz., to be awakened at all, but a spirit of slumber hath been upon thee; God hath given thee eyes, but thou canst not see; ears, and thou canst not hear; thou sayest (it may be) that thou dost hope thou art prepared; alas! thou hast not a virgin's name, much less nature, nor dost thou not deserve it neither; thou hast not forsaken thy loose company, nor yet come to the company of the wise, neither dost thou desire it, or think thyself unworthy of it; thy lamp is out; nay, thou never hadst any light at all, never madest profession at all, as if one ready for Christ; but O, poor wretch, all is yet to do with thee! if so, then remember that if thou diest now, thou shalt never have communion with Jesus Christ in glory.

Section IV.

Object. What if I have not?

Ans. I know it is the misery of men, they can make nothing of this till they feel it: but two things I will say: —

1. Do but consider, what if thou shouldst be deprived of the light of the sun; nay, only of bread, only that one creature, and have clothes, sun, friends, all other blessings but that; would it not be a woe with a witness? would it not cut a man's heart to hear him cry bread, bread, a little bread, for the Lord's sake, to save my life! there is but a drop of the sweetness of Christ in that. O, what a misery will it be to pine away, and famish under wrath in chains of darkness, and to cry, O, a little refreshing from the presence of Christ, and canst not get it, but to live ever tormented without that, when thy soul shall cry, Lord, thus long have I been tormented without thee, till my spirits are weary, and my heart faint; now, O, now a little mercy, — O, no.

2. That though thou seest it no great matter to be separated from Christ now, yet when the heavens shall be in a flaming fire, and the earth shall give up the dead that be in it, and Christ shall appear in infinite glory, admired of angels, blessed of saints, crowned of God, comforting his elect, "Come, O, come, ye blessed;" then you shall think this separation something. O that you would now go home and mourn, and look up to the Lord, that he would make thee ready a vessel of honor, and acknowledge it is righteous with him, if he should never do it!

Section V.

Use 2. It is of examination to all the virgins: would you know whether the Lord will bring you to eternal fellowship with him? are you ready for him, made fit to live with him, or no? for here only those which are ready are received in; the foolish virgins did lie so long asleep, that little did they think they were unready, until the bridegroom came, and it was too late. It is the condition of many at this day, that little dream of their separation from Christ, and yet shall be when he comes; but they have some hopes and assurance; they look to meet the bridegroom when he shall come, and so fall into a sweet sleep; a comfortable condition until the Lord's coming puts them upon more narrow searching than ever before; that which many think gold now shall be found hay and stubble, and consumed to nothing at the coming of Christ; therefore search now.

I know there is many a gracious soul is ready, fears to slip in at the passage over that narrow bridge, between life and death, this end of time and beginning of eternity, and loth I am to sad any; but hear what I shall now say in fear: when there are these three things in the soul, then it is ready; whiles any are wanting, it is unready; and by these try yourselves.

Section VI.

1. When the soul, the spouse of Christ, is made lovely by its wedding garment, the royal robe of his own righteousness in the eyes of Christ; for this bridegroom, though he finds his spouse filthy, yet he, being glorious and lovely himself, makes it lovely and glorious. Eph. v. 25, 26. A queen fit for the fellowship of this King of kings, and through this righteousness (though otherwise weak and vile, yet) the object of his and the Father's infinite and endless delight in heavenly glory; now it is fit. Zech. iii. 1–5; 2 Cor. v. 2, 3. Without this righteousness, there is nothing but shameful nakedness in the best; so as the soul, with Adam, will rather seek bottoms of mountains to hide it from Christ, than to appear before him. Now examine you saints: time was, that sin was no shame to thee, though thou didst wallow in that vomit, and livedst in it, and livedst by it as by thy trade; or if the Lord did keep and cleanse you from foul sins, and that you could pray, and sorrow, and know, and remember what you heard, and had some good affections, now you were somebody in your own eyes, and it may be you thought if you died then, you should to heaven, and Christ must needs save you; whom should he save else? but now the Lord hath made thee poor in spirit, and ashamed; nay, the Lord hath made thee lie down confounded, because of all thy shame before him; and the Lord hath made thee see a glory, a rising sun in Christ's righteousness which the gospel hath brought to light; though thou wert a poor, naked, condemned, vile creature, yet the Lord hath made thee seek for it, so as to esteem all things loss to be found there; and now here is all thou hast to glory in, as that which may make thee lovely in the Father's sight; and here the Lord hath quieted thy conscience, and heart also; be not discouraged, nor afraid to stand before the Lord, if he should send for thee this night; for though thou art vile in thine own eyes, yet the Lord looks upon thee as lovely.

The apostle makes a question, why the Gentiles are justified, and not the Jews, (Rom. ix. 30, 31;) he answers it, (ver. 32,) viz., "They sought it by the works of the law;" but if it be otherwise with thee, that in Christ thy righteousness and strength is, then thou mayst glory; so that now thou shalt have peace again, against all the condemning of conscience, Satan, and God himself.

But have you seen your nakedness, known and stood convinced of your vileness, and have heard the voice of God condemning thee for thy sinful, though civil life, and been afraid,

and hereupon you have reformed your life, lamented your course, set upon some duties, gone to Christ for strength against some corruptions, and you have had it, and you have looked about you, and been ready to say, If the Lord saves not me, whom should he? and so have sewed these leaves and skins together to cover your shame; and now you are well being strangers to this true righteousness, you shall never see the Lord in peace, if you die thus. Or if thus, you see not Christ to be all, sin is not your shame, but you lie in it, and holiness is not your glory; and hence you esteem it not; but it is a common thing to you, if that was, then it would be your glory to be like Christ, and to live to him. Know it, thou art not yet ready, for thou only seest the garment, and you catch at it, but the Lord helps you not by faith to put it on.

Section VII.

2. When the soul is filled with the Spirit of Christ, when there is not only some of the workings of the Spirit in the soul, but the soul is filled with the Spirit; for this was the wound of the foolish virgins, they had lamps, outward profession, and glorious, which was a work of the Spirit, and some dipping of their wick in the oil, some lighter superficial changes, and works of grace in their hearts; they had not oil in their vessel, they had not plenty and fullness of the Spirit; some unripe ears there were, but not full; and hence they were to buy when the Lord Jesus came; but the wise had.

The blood and righteousness of Christ ever brings the plenty of the Spirit of Christ; hence (2 Cor. v. 5) "earnest of the Spirit."

I speak not now of extraordinary fullness, which prophets and apostles had, nor of that fullness which is in glory, as if we must have that here; but of that which the saints attain to in this life, every one according to his need and measure of capableness of the same; the Spirit of love is not dropped, but shed into the heart; the Spirit of God in them is not a Spirit of some light affection, dying affection, but of "eternal life." Rom. viii. 2, 3. The Spirit of mourning doth not only drip upon them, but "it is poured down upon them," (Zech. xii. 10;) the Spirit of wisdom doth not only give them light and knowledge, but "marvelous light." 1 Pet. ii. 9.

I have opened this at large; only three signs now I shall give you to discern this Spirit by.

Section VIII.

1. This Spirit and fullness of it, the saints not only pray for, but they follow their prayers to Christ, until their souls are sweetly satisfied with it, and so it abides daily satisfying their hearts. John iv. 14, "The water I shall give shall be a spring, so as the soul shall not thirst after more grace;" i. e., with a tormenting thirst; not after the world; the grace of God and the Spirit of God in the heart is so sweet, that the soul saith, O, it is enough; O, if my soul might ever be thus near the Lord, endeared to him, walking thus humbly, thankfully, cheerfully with him, this should be all my desire; and hence (John xiv. 16) it is called "the Comforter," which dwells in them, and is known by them; the world knows it not. Now, here is the wound of others, they have the Spirit convincing them of emptiness, misery, nakedness, and they lie so, and they desire; but as Solomon saith, (Prov. xiii. 4,) "They are forsaken of the Spirit, before they find him to be a Comforter quenching their thirsty desires, making them to feel the sweetness of his presence, of his grace." Is. lviii. 11. There were divers that did pray, fast, draw near to God, and did delight in it, but they felt not what they desired at all; there were some lusts, their souls were lean, and like parched deserts; but when the heart is indeed humbled, the Spirit comes in, and makes the bones fat, and like a watered garden; O, therefore, take heed you give not over, till the Lord pour out in thy empty heart of the fullness of his grace.

2. This Spirit ever keeps a man poor and vile in his own eyes, and empty. Take a man that hath no knowledge nor taste of God's grace, while he finds ignorance, he may pray, and be diligent in use of means, and full of life; but when he hath got some knowledge, and can discourse pretty well, and hath some tastes of the heavenly gift, some sweet elapses of grace, and so his conscience is pretty well quieted, and if he hath got some answer to his prayers, and hath sweet affections, he grows full, and having ease to his conscience, casts off sense, and daily groaning under sin; and hence the Spirit of prayer dies, he loses his esteem of God's ordinances, feels not such need of them, or gets no good, feels no life and power by them; and whereas before he could catch at every word, and mourn when he found the Lord passed by him, and speak never a good word to him; now no such trouble, because he is full. This is the woful condition of some, but yet they know it not; but now he that is filled with the Spirit, the Lord empties him, and the longer he lives, so that others think he needs not much grace,

yet he accounts himself the poorest, and feels a need of every truth of God, and ordinance of God; his sin (it is true) continues, it is not quite abolished, and his sighing within himself continues also to his grave. Is. lvii. 15. "Poor," and yet the Lord dwells there; how can these stand together? very well in those who are the Lord's.

3. This Spirit comes in that fullness, as that it so purifies the heart of sin and self, as that it makes the soul set itself for God, as his last end and happiness, and so as that the work of Christ is his blessedness. 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21, "He that purgeth himself from these things, is a vessel of honor, and fit for his Master's use." It is with some souls as it is with some drossy vessels; they are put out of the fire, and they are taken out before their dross is removed, or they melted, or if melted, yet not fashioned for use, even to every good work; so some have great troubles without and within; now the fire goes out, or they get out of the fire, viz., the trouble, before their dross is removed, or their sinful natures be changed; or if they be melted, yet they are not fashioned and framed for their Master's use only; they are for their own use, and their lusts' use, and seek themselves in all they do, but not for the Lord's use; it is not their life to live with God. Promises are sweet, and Christ is sweet, and heaven is sweet; but the work of Christ, to be of use for Christ, this is not their bliss. I know saints fall short here much, and seek themselves; but yet their hearts are prepared, fashioned, set for this end, and they, through the help of the Spirit, refine themselves for the Lord; that when sin desires them to serve it, No, (their answer is,) I am no debtor nor servant to you; I have lived too long to you already; I am now the Lord's, and for the Lord. O that I might have that honor as to be employed for him! I say unto you, the Lord hath here filled you, and fitted you for his use, and you may be comforted.

Section IX.

3. When the soul is recovered out of that security which usually befalls men after some time of first affection and profession, in that measure as that now it lives unto the Lord in a daily waiting for him, and longing for him, when the Lord sees it meet to come and take him to himself. For all these virgins fell asleep, after they came out to meet the bridegroom with their burning lamps; and not only the foolish, but the wise also slept. Now, I ask you, Do you think they were ready then for the Lord? No, not until they were awakened again, and the wise had got their lamps burning again, and waiting for him; but yet the foolish

had got not only no light to their lamps, but oil was wanting also to their vessels; so it is here.

Time hath been, that the Lord hath awakened you with fears and terrors about your state, and you have got into the assemblages of the saints together, and kept company with them, and you have escaped the outward pollutions of the world, and defilements of God's worship and services, and you have seen the insufficiency of all duties, and it is Christ you have looked after, and prayed for, and got some peace and comfort that he is yours, and have looked to meet him, hoped, if you die, that you should be saved; but have you not fallen into a secure frame again, both wise and foolish? have you not turned prodigals, and spent, and lost all, after you have had your portions? if not, thank God, be not high-minded, but fear; for very few but after fullness fall asleep; and after they have had some peace of conscience, they fall to enter into some peace, if not with some foul open sins, yet some truce with some lesser secret sins, and if their oil be not spent, their sorrows spent in sorrowing, their trouble spent in trouble, their desires spent in desiring, (as water spends away itself in running out of a cistern, not out of a spring,) yet their light hath gone out; the beauty of thy profession is (it may be) lost, that heat and life is gone which others saw, and you saw much more: are you ready now? and though you may have some awakenings, yet are they so far as to cause you to get up, and kindle your lamps, and wait for the bridegroom? If it be so that still you keep sleeping, and have not your lamps ready trimmed, then you are just as all the foolish virgins were before the cry came.

Section X.

Quest. But may not a godly man die in a declining, decaying, secure frame?

Ans. 1. He may die in an uncomfortable frame, without great peace of conscience; for sometimes a man's lamp may shine brightest, when his peace is least; but the more prayer, the more searchings and washing of heart is then to be attended; a godly man may die mourning for aught I know, and the Lord give him his garment of gladness in heaven for the spirit of heaviness here on earth; because though he loseth the comfort of his estate, yet not the safety of it, because he dies under the wings of a promise; so that though he dies uncomfortably, yet not securely.

2. He may die to his feeling in such a frame, poor and contrite; for growing in the sense of emptiness, is not decaying in

the being or power of holiness; the Lord is now preparing of him to honor his grace, when he doth not help him to honor his will in that enlargedness of heart to it as he would, so that his soul is not decaying.

3. But yet I do not know that the Lord lets his people die ordinarily in a withering condition, especially if it appear so to others of his discerning servants; the Lord will send some cry to awaken his servants before he comes to them, or they enter into the marriage with him: I will allow some unusual exceptions against general rules, and put in Asa for one, and leave secrets with God; but ordinarily the Lord doth not let his dear servants die in a sottish, secure state. When Samson's locks are cut, and his strength lost, he shall lie in the mill until they be grown again before he dies; and Solomon may run riot, but he shall proclaim his folly to all ages in the world for it, in Eccles., before he dies. Eph. v. 26, 27, "Christ presents his church without wrinkle;" you are to be presented by Christ to the Father, and to be set before Christ without wrinkle, without witherings, and decays: if he loves you, he will wash you, that you may be so.

Section XI.

Quest. But must they be so far awakened, as to wait for the Lord, and desire to be with him, having got vessels full, and lamps burning?

Ans. Yes, in some measure at least; for there are awakenings to the life of duties in this world; by the one, the soul is raised out of this world to the Lord in glory; by the other, the soul is raised up to duties in this world; if the Lord awakens not his saints to the first, either they are not awakened truly, or not thoroughly and effectually; for till then the soul is not ready. Luke xii. 40, with 45. As it is with a man who is sent for to enjoy favor and fellowship of the king, he is not ready for it, until he stands waiting at the door, and that it is his business, the patterns of mercy, and vessels of glory, are ever set out in the New Testament by this. Heb. ix. *ult.*; Tit. ii. 12, 13.

Look as it was with Simeon, (Luke ii. 25,) he had a promise he should see Christ before he died; hence he waited for the consolation of Israel; so the soul, having a promise of seeing Christ when he is dead, it makes him wait for this time; and when he wants a promise sealed, though he waits not nextly, yet he waits remotely, that the Lord would cause him to believe it, that so he might wait for it; that is his end, this is the means, he knows it is best to be with the Lord, where is no sin, but

holiness; he hath found him sweet in his looks, in his words, in his works, in his hopes, his first fruits, but to be with him is best.

This is not such a high pitch which saints come not to, it is indeed such which hypocrites come not to; the hypocrite's end is to escape misery: hence they desire comfort by duties, that they shall be freed from it, but not to enjoy Christ; the Lord never tied in their souls such a knot of faith and love which works this.

For, 1. Security of saints, it is not the privation of life, (that is death,) but a suspension of the acts of a heavenly life; there is in them love to Christ, delight in him, happiness in living to him, pleasing of him; but it is suspensed by cares or contents of the world, and love of ease; hence a Christian is never thoroughly awakened till he comes to that life again; his heart is with Christ in heaven; and because he can not be there, hence he stays a while, and looks, and waits for it: another security is the privation of life, of empty duties arising from some vanishing affections, as in the foolish virgins which were to quiet conscience only; hence their awakening is only to that life again at the best, if ever God do awaken them, unless the Lord indeed convert them.

2. Every thing will mightily tend to that to which its nature bends and inclines it; as a stone, if thrown upward, will mightily tend downward. Some say there is an element of fire above, because this here endeavors to ascend, as being out of its place; he that is of the earth, he will be tending to it, though awakened, though lifted up; saints will be tending upward, because their nature is heavenly, loving, looking, waiting, longing, (2 Cor. v. 3, 4, with 1,) as angels here be willing to stay to do the work, but yet they long to be before the face of God again, because their natures are heavenly, and there their proper place is.

Now, for the Lord Jesus' sake, examine yourselves here. I hope some are awakened, the word hath done it; cry of afflictions, inward temptations have made you look about you, and you are wearied out with your own ways; but are you not since grown secure? time was, the feet of the messengers of peace were glorious, but now their message is mean; Sabbaths longed for, now you are weary of them, heartless in them, sleep with the spoon in your mouths; private duties were seasons of breaking the heart, refreshing and comforting from the Lord, but now you neglect them, slight them, and the Lord in them, and are not much troubled at it, because you have some excuse or other for it; thy mouth was full of good questions, now thou thinkest

thyself more fit to teach than learn; thy society was sweet as the rose in spring, now the sweet odor of it is lost: time was, thou wert exceeding tender of the least sin, and not a day passed but thy cheeks were wet in secret before the Lord; now thou art grown blind and bold, and you can defile yourself in all your ways, and your faith in Christ keeps you from repentance for sin; time was, the truth was glorious, and you could make use of your notes many a day after, when you did not find good in public; but now pen and ink is left at home, you cast your bread into corners, and feed not your hearts therewith: time was, you could take a rebuke kindly, when you were little in your own eyes; but now, if you think a reproof is meant of you, your hearts can swell; nay, now your judgment decays: What warrant for private prayers twice a day? what warrant for weekly sermons, when we have six days to labor, and one to rest in? you were formerly more exact, but now wiser, and thus you lie, and as if you were come to the end of your race already, and reach not after things before you, you have enough grace, hence you think you shall be saved, and so sit still, and now play the good husband. O, the covenants you have had, if ever you came hither what you would do! O, the esteem of the Lord afar off! but now you are broken by your voyage, and your vessel is cracked, oil is run out, and lamp is out; will you die so? if you say yes, I profess you are not ready; it is a question if ever you had grace, if it be so; and therefore bless God, the Lord gives you warning this day; but I fear many will not stir till Christ comes; I say as she to Samson, "Up, for the Philistines are upon thee;" so I say, security is upon thee, and wrath is now gone out to awaken thee, if the word doth not.

Section XII.

Use 3. *Of Exhortation.* Labor to be in a readiness, awaken out of your sleep, and get your garments on, your loins girt, your vessels full, your lamps burning, that you may indeed be ready, and the Lord may find you so, as well as men think you so. It is Christ's exhortation. Luke xii. 40. Whereupon Peter asked, did he speak that parable only to the disciples, or of all? (ver. 41,) he answers, all, especially them that know the Lord's mind herein, and do it not, Ver. 47. So you may ask me, Whom do I press to make ready? I answer, all. Two sorts I shall therefore name.

1. Those who are yet unready, either in whole or part.
2. Those who are ready, but not so ready as those should be

who stand before the Lord, and as themselves will wish another day they had been; the wise, as well as foolish, may be sleepy, and so unready for a time; but O, awake.

First. Those who are unready and unprepared for the Lord and his coming; are there any such? yes, very many; some there be who know they are unready, and will not yet buy, and yet prepare not for it, because they are young enough yet, or have time enough to provide for that hereafter. Some others, because they cry, Lord, Lord, and look to Christ, and are well thought of by the wise, that think they are ready; but know it, all your thoughts, and cares, and prayers, and endeavors, are little enough for it, even all your life; and yet to prepare for this hath been the least part of many a man's life; and such is the security of some, that till Christ come, they will not gird up themselves to this work.

Section XIII.

Motive 1. Consider the lamentable end of one who dies unready; some (not all) the Lord leaves for terrors to the secure world, who are as good as men risen from the dead, to tell men of the vanity of their sinful courses, who looking upon time past, they see that it is irrecoverably lost and passed, away as a dream, and lost as a shadow; look upon time present, they felt their souls left naked, their accounts not made, an end come to all their hopes and comforts here, their body sick, their conscience trembling, if not tearing their hearts hard, God departed, the grave opened for their filthy carcasses, and devils waiting for their secure souls. And now, say such, what profit have I for all my vanity under the sun? Look to time to come; there they see the throne set, the Lord Jesus on it, their souls standing naked before him, whose grace was great toward them whiles they lived, but whose face now is a consuming fire; and they behold eternity, even that eternal black gulf between them and the Lord; and here they lie wishing they had taken their time, professing now their time is lost, beseeching others to take warning by them, desiring the prayers of others, yet thinking, though Noah and Samuel should stand before the Lord for them, there is no hope. Come and tell them, Do not cast away mercy, cast not away that blood, which is worthy to be gathered up by blessed angels in vessels of gold; lament, and return, and the Lord will to you: what, tell you me of repenting and believing? is a sick time a fit time to repent in? but the Lord hath done great things for you; you have thought so, but there were such sins, or such a

sin, I knew, you knew not; I knew it, yet I loved it; I had indeed some lazy purposes to forsake it, but the Lord hath taken me in my seemings; but mercy is infinite; O, it is my torment; I have seen an end of my sins, and now I feel the beginning of my torment! happy are they that die in the Lord, and thrice happy that make ready for the Lord.

Motive 2. Consider thou hast but a short time to prepare in, and the time will be then, when thou dost least think of it. Luke xii. 46. The Lord's arrows are now flying abroad; if you did think you should be next smitten down dead, you would prepare; but you think the Lord delays his coming; O, remember, that time thou dost least think of, Christ will come.

Motive 3. If unready now, you will be much more unready next day; grant thy time to be long, you will be the more unfit the longer you delay; thou hast hinderances now, the longer thou livest thou wilt have more and more; thy heart will be harder every day than another.

Section XIV.

Means 1. Pray unto the Lord that he would prepare you, and fit you, give his Christ and fullness of his Spirit unto you, which you know the Lord will give to them that ask; for man, like the potter's clay, is no more able to prepare himself for glory than to appoint and elect himself thereunto; hence, (Ps. x. 17; Rom. ix. 23,) "prepared to glory;" therefore pray; not that prayer can move the Lord to it, but because it is a means appointed of God to execute his eternal purposes of grace unto the vessels of grace. Acts ix. 9, 11. Paul was three days mourning, and he did not eat and drink, and yet he was not discouraged, but kept on praying, and ceaseth not, till the Lord sends Ananias that he might receive the Spirit. Ver. 17. So say I to you, Time hath been thou hast not prayed, mornings, evenings, your sleep would not suffer you; or if so, yet it hath been without mourning for living without Christ, abusing of Christ, and the sin of your nature; or if so, it hath been only by fits, and you could hold up your head again, before God sends Ananias with a message of peace, or that message without the Spirit of grace: are you now prepared? O, no! O, therefore, now begin this work; say, I am thy clay, Lord, and have been a broken, unclean vessel, unfit for any use, to hold any grace; if mercies come, I forget thee, and grow worse; if sickness, I am blockish; if ordinances, I despise them; if thou forsakest me, I forsake thee; if thou drawest near to me, I resist thee; if Christ be offered, I reject him; if not,

I presume, and turn his grace into wantonness; now, Lord, gather a broken vessel; if I live I shall still sin, if I die I shall blaspheme. If I forsake acts of sin, yet lusts of sin remain; if they be quenched, yet my polluted nature remains not cleansed, and the guilt cries. Now, Lord, undertake for me, begin thou the work, and take the glory; and here mourn till the Lord comes; know the worth and prize the presence of the Spirit, and then pray. John xiv. 16. The world can not receive it, because they know it not, with John iv. 10. Sacrifice is unfit to be offered, till by shedding blood life is taken away.

Means 2. Be very watchful over your hearts, that they grow not too gentle, and handle tenderly sins arising after faith, and profession of your interest in Jesus Christ, sins of the second growth; some sins grow up before profession, as all manner of ignorance, and hardness, and lasciviousness, and vanity; now many grow terrified for these, and comforted by the gospel against these, and now peace is made; O, but there are some men's natures like some fields, which when they are mown and weeded, yet they have a second growth; it may be as with other kind of weeds, you may never fall to those sins you lived in once, but other sins more close, more spiritual; like the house, (Luke xi. 24,) swept and emptied, but "seven other spirits worse than the former may at last enter in." O, take heed of these, for they will make your latter end miserable; you know habitations of Satan are not fit mansions for the Spirit of Christ; you know vessels not only of wood, but of gold, if filthy and poisoned, are unfit for princes' use till cleansed; and look through all the Scriptures on the faces of the best hypocrites, you shall find some filth growing up after their profession, or together with it, like blood and sacrifice mixed together. Matt. vii. 23; Luke xiii. 27. Not those that have iniquity, but those that work it; not those that work against it, and are destroyers of it by little and little, but workers of it.

If you ask me, what those sins be, I answer, these tares, and choking thorns, as they are sown, and grown while you be asleep, so they may be seen when they are grown up, if you walk in your fields, and meditate on your hearts. I will only name some.

1. Pride, affecting some excellency above others, and thinking yourself somebody.

2. Spiritual fullness, and secret loathing of ordinances, when men are clogged with them.

3. Despising known truths, (which, like flowers, were notwithstanding sweet at first gathering,) either concerning your misery,

or Christ; if the gospel were preached to the ignorant, they would take heaven with violence; but thy soul now is not moved, and the messengers of God that bring them despised, as Galatia and Corinth did Paul.

4. A spirit of contention with good people. Now you can not bear unkindnesses, and they offend you, etc. Alexander at first stood for Paul, and he opposeth Paul to his face at last.

5. Boldness to sin in small matters, commonly without sorrow, beget by counterfeit assurance of God's love.

6. Seeking of God in ordinances, and working of iniquity out of them; fits men have of good affections, but healthful constitutions of bad ones.

7. Thinking you are indeed what you would be, and yet indeed would not be. There be other sins, but these are some of the most special which I shall now mention: take heed of letting these grow, or dealing gently with them; for saints may feel these, but they put their hooks to the roots of these weeds, and would fain pull them quite up; but if you deal gently, (as David with the young Absalom,) and think God must do all, I can not part with them; and hence you give way to them; and though there be these sins, yet I have many good signs and promises too I shall be saved; and so long as they can not destroy my soul, what though they grow in my soul? You perish (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27) if thus it be with you.

Means 3. Take heed you do not run away with such comforts arising from your feeding upon the promise and person of Christ, without refreshing the soul also with the good will and commands of Christ; do not think yourselves ready to enjoy Christ, when his promise, person, and love is sweet, (which is good,) but his will is bitter, and a burden to thy soul, even thy whole soul, (I know it is so to the unregenerate part of godly men.) for such men there be. 1 John i. 6. To the saints Christ's love is sweet, and promise sweet, and therefore his will, his work. John iv. 34. Bread you know not of, "to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish it;" so it is their food to do the will of him that loves them, and finish it: if a man is to remove from one country to another, and he can not live upon the bread of the country, nor water, where he goes, he is then unfit for such a journey, because he can not live upon the bread of it. Now, what is that which feeds the life of saints in glory? not only Christ, but living unto Christ, to be perfected under the government and kingdom of Christ; can you live upon this now in part, and the first fruits of it? if you can, know it is then prepared for thee, and thou for it; if not, but you live (as you say) upon the present

sweet of the promise; nay, it may be upon the thoughts of old comforts; but to do the will of Christ is death, not life, to you; and it is merely your task for wages, to do his will, not part of your inheritance; you are unfit to be with Christ. Acts xxi. 13, "Why break you my heart?" saith Paul; "I am ready to die for the sake of Christ;" and to do much more, so think thus, Was Paul ready to die, and I not ready to do? my heart loathes thy commands, Lord; but what the law makes heavy, the gospel makes sweet; for thy sake, Lord, I love thy will; pray, O, thy love is sweet, but let thy will be so also.

Means 4. Labor to grow poor in spirit, that when you can not honor the Lord's will, yet you may be gathering something out of all sins and wickednesses, to honor God's grace: the glory of grace is the last end; those that be prepared for it shall enjoy it; who are these? The poor, who when they see they have lost their lives, their souls, their comforts, in not doing his will, which is bitter to them, yet the Lord shall not lose the honor of his grace. Ps. lxxiv. 21. The poor will be thankful: what doth Paul, that vessel of grace, persecutor, blasphemer, but a saint, now say? O, but the least of them, but he was an apostle; but I deserve not that name, but yet he is received to mercy: it is very true, yet never such an example as he thinks, and therefore saith he, To the King immutable, etc., when Jacob had seen the Lord, (Gen. xvi. *ult.*,) if he shall give me food and raiment, he shall be my God; (i. e., I shall then magnify him, he having said he would be so before;) and he had it in plenty; so say, if the Lord shall pity, pardon, I shall then give all to him, if I had a thousand hearts, tongues; truly, as, (Ps. xl. *ult.*,) "The Lord now thinketh on you;" when a servant hath spent and lost his master's estate, and he is to give up an account, truly then he may give it with comfort, when as he gains one way abundantly, though he loseth another, and makes the best gains; so here.

Section XV.

Motive 1. To those who are ready, but yet not so ready as is meet.

The Lord hath given you warning to prepare, by some sharp afflictions on thyself, or by the death of thy friends, or by secret fears of thine own heart, thy time is not many hand breadths longer, and it may be this shall be the funeral sermon of some of you; you have been flying like bees abroad in the world to gather your honey, and the Lord hath been smoking of you, and that in your hive; you have thought to dwell long in tabernacles, the Lord hath let it fall to decay, and repairs it not again.

Motive 2. If you live unready, it may be the Lord will try you with some sore conflict, with fears of death and terrors of darkness; and all your preparation is too little for your combat then.

Motive 3. The place of glory is made ready for you; how shall I, so unholy, see God? Christ is there (John xiv. 13) waiting for thee, longing after thee.

Motive 4. Thou art, it may be, yet in many respects unready. As, —

1. Not yet planted in the house and church of God, not yet gathered to communion of Christ in his saints on earth. I know men may have just reasons to defer; but if they have none, I would be loth to die in their room: Hezekiah, Is. xxxviii. *ult.* Ps. xxvi. 8, "I have loved the habitation of thy house; O, gather not my soul with the wicked." I am persuaded, some dear to Christ linger here, and you can not find this nor that saving good in yourselves, you say; I had rather hear one mourn for emptiness, than boast of his grace.

2. There are many sins not yet sufficiently mourned for, in days of youth, and in a secure condition; in heaven is no mourning: O, therefore, take time now, for want of this grace is not so sweet.

3. It may be some main duty is neglected to the souls of them thou hast a charge of, as not catechizing thy family, children, careful for their souls.

4. It may be thou hast been little in prayer for the churches, (though for thy family and children,) which is usually the last work of the saints; there is no praying for them in heaven; as Christ at the end of his life like a priest shed blood, and prayed for them, so saints are made priests to God and Christ.

5. It may be thy house is not yet set in order, nor thy will made, reckonings between men not yet set right and even, and then there are quarrels when thou art dead, and trouble when you die.

6. It may be thou art grown secure, and art lost, and driven away, and many wrinkles be on thy face and heart, etc.; you can not say with Paul, (2 Tim. iv.,) "That you have fought," etc., but are rather at truce with sin; you run not, but have slipped, and fallen down, and so lost all.

Section XVI.

Means 1. Therefore to help here in this readiness, get a heart more loosened and weaned from the world. Solomon he did launch out his heart herein too far; not in epicurism, but (Eccl.

ii. 3) "applying his heart to wisdom" all this time; so may you, and be unready; how? I can not, but God will teach it you by affliction. Ps. xxxix. 6, 7. You are sojourners here with God, as all your fathers; there is nothing proper, nothing long to be enjoyed.

Means 2. Own the Lord Jesus; he is yours, but you own him not; as Simeon came to the temple, and there found him, and there blessed God; "And now," (saith he,) "let me depart in peace;" hath the Lord stirred up unutterable sighings, and groanings, and mournings, (you think, it may be, if Christ was present, you would not doubt of answer,) and they continue still, and do you think Christ is hard-hearted? hath the Lord come to thee in the temple, and manifested his love by his own promise, sure and faithful, and wilt thou not yet believe thou hast had, and hast now the first fruition of the Spirit, and wilt not yet own him? and art afraid to go to him, when others are in glory that trod in thy steps? O, be humbled for it; I know there is nothing which makes thee fear it, but a rebellious, vile heart, and nature; and can the Lord love such a one? yes; such a one, if he mourns under it. Rom. vii. 24. Is. lvii. 18, 19, "The Lord will create peace; he hath seen thy ways, and he will heal them;" and when you have him thus, own him daily, keep your peace, do nothing which may make you lose boldness in prayer, and therefore reckon daily with him; and remember, the promise stands, when feelings are lost.

Object. But I can do but little for him.

Ans. True. Is. lxiv. 6. Thou the Lord's clay, his vessel, though of little public use, yet in thy place do what thou canst for Christ Jesus. Servants, masters, members, rich, poor, bestir yourselves for Christ; you shall lose nothing by it, etc.

Ver. 10. *The door was shut.*

In these words is set down the consequent of that which immediately followed, the wise virgins' gracious entertainment with Christ: "The door was shut," by which is signified the exclusion of the foolish from the fellowship of Christ; as also the greatness of Christ's love to the wise, opening the door of glory unto them; and when they are gathered, shutting the door against every one else.

Hence observe, —

Observ. 1. That the endeared love of Christ to his elect doth much appear in this, in opening the door of glory unto them, and shutting it against others of esteem and name in the church of God; for this is one scope of the words. Gen. vii. 16.

To open the kingdom of heaven to all the world, and save all, would be great love in the eyes of the saints; but to save them, and condemn others, to receive them, and exclude others, and that of great name and esteem, virgins, this sets out the Lord's love exceedingly; Christ's distinguishing, separating love is his great love. Matt. xi. 25.

Reason 1. If we consider the multitude of the one, and fewness of the other, not only in regard of the world, but in regard of others in churches; (Luke xiii. 24,) "Many shall seek, and many that are first shall be last." Matt. xix. 30.

Reason 2. If we consider that there is as much reason appearing outwardly, that the Lord should choose the one as well as the other; what difference is appearing outwardly between these virgins? I will warrant you the wise did think the foolish as good, and it may be far better than themselves. Judg. vi. 15, saith Gideon, "How wilt thou save Israel by me? I am the least in my father's house; yet, saith the Lord, I will be with thee;" so the saints may say, and do say, Why, Lord, wilt thou save me? I am the least and poorest of all others.

Reason 3. If we consider the reason why the Lord doth this, and that is because of nothing but the will of God, his good pleasure. Matt. xi. 25. For why should their vessels be filled? they received, and not others, only the will of God; "I know not you," etc. Of which hereafter.

Reason 4. If we consider the intolerable torment of those who go far, and yet are excluded; (Matt. viii. 11, 12,) "Children of the kingdom cast out, there shall be weeping;" the higher a man is risen, the greater is his fall, and his bruises at the bottom; so when one hath been raised up to great hopes, profession, affection, yet now to fall, to lose all, to see he hath been spinning cobwebs all his life! when Israel were near to Canaan, now to be shut out! Now they wept.

Use 1. We may see hence, what little cause any have to boast only in outward privileges, or common gifts, graces, excellencies. I confess it is great mercy for the Lord to call a man out of his profaneness, and separate him from the world, bringing him to the fellowship of saints, and give him that which makes him reputed well of by others; but boast not only of this, as if the Lord did therefore highly favor you; for Jesus may show (for all this) his love to his own, and his terror to thee, and may shut the door of glory at last upon thee. 1 Cor. i. 27–29, "The Lord chooses things that are not, to bring to nought and to stain other glory." Rom. xi. 17, The Gentiles boasted themselves that they were graffed in; O, saith the apostle, (seeing this spirit apt to rise,) boast

not, be not high-minded, do not grow secure, but fear; common graces ever make men proud, as others make men humble; they despise not others, they magnify God; if the Lord hath made a difference, see the goodness of God, (ver. 22,) but boast not therein; therefore do not content thyself with a name to live, and having some cankered hopes, some shining excellencies; for the Lord may do this to show others his love, and yet stain thy glory; as one that hath great hopes of preferment, many friends to commend and speak for him; if one tells him, You shall certainly lose all your labor, he will mourn more than another that had no hopes, nor helps at all of rising; he will not glory in any thing he hath, but will take some sure and safer way; so I say to you, if there be the least grace and favor, bless God for that, but do not boast of any thing else.

Use 2. Hence the saints may learn how to affect their hearts with the Lord's love to them, (for there is such a poisonful disposition in them, that though they have it, yet they can not be affected sometimes with it: Up, Deborah; awake, lute and harp,) and it is this; do not only remember, and think on the Lord's love saving thee, calling, humbling, etc., but so as to call thee, and leave others; to quicken thee, and leave others dead; to open the door of glory to thee, and exclude others; to call thee out of thy sinful company, some of which like brands are now smoking in this world, others burning in another; to call thee out of a sinful, ignorant family, thou the least, the worst of them, and to leave the rest, this is much!

But when thou art brought into the kingdom of heaven, fellowship of saints, for the Lord to love thee, set his heart upon thee, when he forsakes others of thy own company of great parts and abilities, whom thou thinkest better of than thyself, at least as well; to pull down these princes to the dunghill, and to exalt thy horn; to cut down these cedars, and to preserve a shrub; to tread upon the greatest glory of man, and to pity a worm, for so thou art in thine own eyes; O, let this fire warm thy heart, thou hast been affected with it before, specially considering no reason for it, but only the good pleasure of God; this affected Christ himself. Matt. xi. 25. It is true, you do not see this done, but you shall one day behold it with your eyes; only let this love kindle love, thankfulness, humility in thine heart again.

And hence, if the Lord hath put a difference between thee and others, do not deny, do not doubt of, do not despise his grace; that if thou hast lost thy first love, this may recover it; if all his love makes thee more humble and thankful, "you stand." Rom. xi. 20; Is. lxv. 16. Do not fear thy estate, because the

Lord cuts off the natural branches, that therefore thou mayst be one; but be fearful of the least sin, and wrong to Christ, that hath loved thee, especially of pride, and unthankfulness, the root of that; and remember, that the poor things are chosen to confound the mighty.

Observ. 2. That the door of grace and glory shall be shut against all wicked men living, at the coming of the Lord at death or judgment; there is a time that the door is open unto men, in regard of ministerial dispensations, (for secrets of election we are not to mind.) Is. lv. 6, 7. This time is in this life; but when death comes, then it is shut; when angels sinned, the Lord immediately shut the door against them: but through Christ the door is open for term of life to men.

Reason 1. Because after death there is no means of grace or glory left, which is the ministry of the word and prayer; for that is the chief key of opening the door, even when the doors of heart and heaven are shut. Matt. xvi. 19, and hence 2 Cor. vi. 2. Now is the time of prayers and preaching, and so to be helped; but after death there are no ministers, they are at rest from their labors; and the ministry of men is for men, not for naked souls. Lazarus must not give a drop of cold water then to cool the tongue, much less ministers to comfort or convert their hearts: it is true, the Lord can work extraordinarily; but do you think he will do it for one that hath despised grace all his life?

Reason 2. Because it is impossible they should repent after death, by any other means, (if means were afforded,) as by seeing their sin, and feeling their punishment. John ix. 4, "The night cometh wherein no man can work;" because after death comes judgment of wrath to the wicked, (Heb. ix. *ult.*;) all patience and pity hath forsaken them, and so wrath lies upon them, that they can do nothing but bear it; as one under a great load, or burning in the fire, all his thoughts, and affections, and spirits, are taken up with that, and that is all that he can do. Heb. x. 27. So here.

Use 1. Of confutation of a viperous, fantastical, secret opinion, which like a ghost haunts the minds of some people, viz., that think and conclude even in time of health, in midst of saving, healing means, that their time of grace is past, and the door is shut to them, before Christ comes against them at death or judgment; which though God many times turns for good, to humble a bold heart which will burn God's daylight out, and linger in its sins, yet it doth sometimes dead the heart from all effectual endeavors, and discourage the heart from all duties,

makes all the gospel the ministry of blood and death, and a handwriting against it; and when it concludes God hath shut the door against it, it shuts God, and Christ, and all his promises out of its heart.

1. Some think they have sinned against light, have had some blasphemous thoughts, that they have committed the unpardonable sin, etc.

2. Some others think not so, but yet they hear that some men's time is out before death: they think theirs is also; having sought so long, they are even sealed up by God to hardness of heart; and thus some, seemingly coming to Christ, are indeed kept off from him.

3. Others of the saints meeting with many sore troubles and trials, and that for some sins; and one deep calling to another, they think with David, "God hath forgot, hath shut up his mercies, will remember no more to be gracious;" and though he hath been so, yet because he hath been so abused by them, that therefore now he will not be merciful again; and thus their hearts sink.

O, remember, the gate of God's grace is not shut up before death; then is the time for it to be shut. I confess, indeed, there is a time in this life the Lord doth cease to strive, and doth forsake the soul; and we may say of them, as Christ, "O that thou hadst known! but now they are hid from thine eyes;" but yet this is a secret, which as a secure despiser of grace should tremble at, so those that are awakened, and set in their way to Christ, should not trouble themselves about it.

Object. But O that I did know whether it be past or no!

Ans. I shall rather give to these people some good counsel; for it is not for you to know these times and seasons; though this I would say, if the unpardonable sin be not committed.

1. This time of the door's being shut is not in time of health and peace, but in time of extreme trouble, wherein trouble doth affect them more than the sin; as Prov. i., and as many when a sick bed is come, and in Noah's flood. 1 Pet. iii. 20.

2. Or if it be in time of health, this is ever the companion of it, (viz., hatred, and opposing saints secretly or openly, because Christ having quite forsaken him, his heart swells against the saints; hence Saul envied David, Esau hated Jacob; murmurers against God were in the wilderness, and against Moses; but I come to counsel; for God lets loose Satan, full of malice, upon a poor creature, sometimes to vex and trouble.

First. Consider the root of this distemper; viz., either great pride, or despising of the riches of God's grace.

1. Pride; for (this we shall find) such spirits, because they have not peace sealed, strength against sin granted unto them, and that which they would have, (if discouraged, and not quickened by this,) they regard not life, means, offers of grace; what is all this, if God hath forsaken me? What is it? Yes, that it is, as might at large be showed.

2. Despising of grace; if I had not committed such sins, I could then think for mercy; but such evils, such miseries, can not be remedied. Truly, as it is a despising of a physician, to think, If I was not sick, he would be tender and helpful; but not now being so exceedingly diseased; so it is here, etc.

Secondly. Consider, suppose the time be past, yet remember thou art worthy to be forsaken of God even from thy birth, not worthy of thy daily bread, much less to taste of God's supper; the Lord was loth to shut the door; hence he wept on Jerusalem, and (Ps. lxxxi. 12) cried out, "O that my people had walked in my ways!" thy sins provoked the Lord unto it, if he hath in justice cast thee off; therefore, though it be past, be not discouraged, but lie down humbled, as Judg. x. 14, 15, and as David, (Ps. xlii. 3,) "My tears are my meat, while they say so, Where is your God?" So tell the Lord, Satan saith, and feeling saith, and fears say, Where is my God? Lord, pity! and if thy heart be sick, tell the Lord of it. Ver. 6. I am persuaded many should quickly feel an answer to this question, by taking this course; but they miss at least of the comfort of grace and mercy, because they will be disposers of the Lord's grace and time.

Thirdly. Consider, it may be that time is not past, it is a secret only known to God; the door of grace may only seem to be shut; why doth Christ bid knock else? When the Ninevites heard that they should die within forty days, (Jon. iii. 9,) say they, "Who can tell but the Lord may repent?" you say the decree is past, and spoken; and as Spira said, I have that witnessed. I say again, who can tell but (if God hath said so, but) that he may repent? therefore be not discouraged, or faint because of this. Nay, it is most probable time is not past.

1. Because the things of thy peace, the discovery of the vileness of thine own heart, the glory of Christ is not hid from thine eyes.

2. God calls thee now to return; when Judah had banished David, and they might think, He will not receive us, yet when David sent by his messengers, "Why do you not bring the king back? I am flesh of your flesh;" then they were all encouraged to hope for favor. 2 Sam. xix. 12, 14. So, —

Fourthly. Consider, if thou dost return, the time of love is so far from being past, as that it is then come indeed unto thy soul.

Object. But my sin is great.

Ans. Suppose it be blasphemy of Christ, nay, murder of the Son of God; yet, (Acts ii. 38,) when Peter preached "repentance to life," they that gladly received that word, who might be instrumental to crucify Christ, were received. O, but my heart is hard; (Hos. x. 12,) break up your fallow ground, etc. It is time, saith he, etc.

Object. But I have refused to return, and have not been ashamed.

Ans. Yet, (Jer. iii. 3–5,) "Wilt thou not from this time cry to me?" etc.

Object. But I may return to the Lord, and he refuse to return to me.

Ans. No; (Jer. viii. 7,) "Shall he fall, and not arise? shall the Lord turn away, and not return?" Why then is he fallen perpetually? the reason is given, "No man said, What have I done? how have I despised God's grace? the stork knows her season," but, etc.: the Lord keep you from dashing yourselves in pieces here, and make this a word of Christ's encouragement to thee.

Use 2. Of exhortation unto all men, not to delay your making peace with God; for when you are dead the gate is shut; and if angels should cry to have it opened, they shall not be heard.

You that are young, take warning this day; do not think there is time enough hereafter. You that are old, do not think it too late, or that it would be a shame to you to begin now, who have propped up your hearts with base comforts; you that have been stirred, but are now fallen asleep, beware of dying in your ditches and pits wherein you are fallen; you must stand before God shortly. Though you never repented yet, etc., never was in bitterness, never had any great mourning, etc., never knew the life of Christ, peace of conscience, never felt the kingdom, and mighty power of Christ, yet despair not, for yet there is hope; but if once death comes, then thou art gone: it is day yet, and Christ holds open his wings yet; but if death comes, his time is out.

Object. But I have a fair time yet before me.

Ans. 1. It may be not, for thou art condemned already.

2. If you have, yet wilt abuse patience and forbearance of God? wilt despise what leads thee to repentance? as a man sinking spits in the face of him that holds up his head; wilt thou be worse than a devil?

Object. But a little repentance will serve the turn; it is quickly done.

Ans. O, no; as Paul said, "I have fought a good fight;" thou hast sins as dear as thy life to forsake; thou hast devils, world to wrestle with; nay, God himself to wrestle with: you can not run your race in a day.

Object. What if I be shut out?

Ans. I say no more, but only what Solomon said, (Prov. v. 11–13,) "O, how have I hated reproof! that shall be thy woful dirge another day, when shut out; O, never to have one look, one word from Christ, but to see him afar off; this shall be thy fearful portion hereafter. Truly we may take up that complaint of Christ, You can discern the times of the weather, not Christ's coming.

Ver. 11, 12. *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

In these two verses is set down the entertainment Christ gives unto the foolish virgins, and his behavior toward them; and that is, he did not own them as his, but saith, "I know you not." Their miserable rejection is aggravated from these particulars, showing their misery.

1. The note of certainty of this, "Verily," etc.
2. Though they came afterward to the Lord, (it is not said with their oil in their vessels, etc.)
3. Though they prayed to the Lord to open when they came.
4. Though they prayed earnestly, "Lord, Lord."
5. Though they sought thus with arguments, "Lord, Lord," as if they should say, Thou art our Lord and Saviour; we look for life from none but thee.

Observ. 1. That after the coming of Christ to death or judgment, then shall those who are most secretly wicked, know certainly that the gate is shut, and their exclusion, and final separation from the face of Christ.

These foolish virgins had some hopes and assurances of mercy, while the bridegroom was absent in their life; so men have in this world such hopes; but when Christ came and shut the door upon them, then they knew their miserable condition.

This life is compared unto a sleep and dream, (Ps. xc. 5,) wherein men understand and conceive of things with false shapes; so here; but when they awaken, they appear otherwise; after death men are awakened, and then they see things as they are; the parable of the rich man (Luke xvi.) proves this.

Reason 1. Because God then lets in a new light, most full and clear, to see and know things as they are, and so to know themselves and their estates; it is an atheist's speech, (Eccl. ix. 5, 7, 10,) "That the dead know not any thing;" and hence be as merry as you can, eat thy bread with joy, etc. No, now they do know, etc., as the saints know their eternal acceptation by a most glorious light; God walks darkly here, but then this full light shall come in; as it is with a man that is to be condemned, before he be cast, the judge brings in full evidence; so, (Heb. ix. *ult.*,) "After death cometh judgment;" there is full evidence; when Adam stood before God, the Lord fully convinced him; when death comes, then there is an end of men's stewardships, (Luke xvi. 2,) and when an end comes to that, what comes then? Come, give up thy account; now those whose reckonings are nought, must either deceive and blind the all-searching eyes of God, and so not be found out, or they shall see wherein they have been faithless and false. What is spoken of the general judgment is true also of this particular, it is the day of revelation; God himself will now clear up matters as Christ doth here, "Verily, I know you not."

Reason 2. Because then the soul will desire to know, and have leisure to see and know itself; as these foolish virgins, their souls were looking (in a sort) in their lifetime for Christ, but now they look and see indeed; some know not themselves, though having light; nor their present misery, because they desire not to know, and hence reflect not upon themselves according to light now; or if they desire so to do, yet they have not leisure; the noise and multitude of cares keeps them from a clear knowing of their estates: but now men shall be brought to the land of solitariness, and shall have leisure to see, having God's light in to see by; there shall then be no business, but only to consider, Who am I? and what have I done? men shall have no cities to build, no business to do, as Felix then, and hence put out the light.

Reason 3. Because then conscience is thoroughly awakened, because it is a time of judgment now, and if so, then the witnesses must appear; though they have been silent long before, they shall be forced to speak. Now, it is wonderful to see what conscience will speak when God awakens it; men many times will not see the evil which they have done, but conscience will make them see it, nay, confess it, when it is awakened. Three things conscience will do, when it is awakened.

1. It will show a man his chief sins; which he defended, which he extenuated, which he never suspected; "these things hast thou done."

2. It can bring fresh to memory sins forgotten, slighted, dead, and buried, a great number, all of them as if new done; (John iv. 29,) "all things that ever I did."

3. It can and will aggravate all these things and sins, and present them in the greatness of them, that men's mouths shall pass their own sentence upon them, as Cain did; that let all the world persuade them their case is good, they can not believe it; now this we see in this life in some, but when life is ended, then these things shall be acted much more lively; (Ps. i. 21,) "I will reprove thee," even of what they thought God did approve, "and I will set them in order," in their number and greatness before their eyes; i. e., of conscience; all falsehoods, deceits, loathsome tricks, etc. I did this and that, but I had these ends in them, and I harbored these sins by them, will conscience make men say.

Reason 4. Because now Satan, to whose custody the soul is committed, appears to the soul, and it sees itself in his hands. The best hypocrite is never delivered out of the hands of Satan and his power; he will either keep constant possession, or if not, yet he will return again; now he will not appear in this time of peace to the soul, because there is yet hope; but after death, then hope is past, and therefore then he appears; for as the souls of the elect are carried to heaven by angels, and blessed among them, so, *e contra*, the souls of the wicked are in the hands of devils; (1 Pet. iii. 19,) "He preached to the spirits now in prison;" thieves, so long as they are not known, or, if known, not apprehended, they fear not death; but when taken and laid up in prison, there they know their death, and there they see their jailer; so here; and as Satan did condemn and sad the heart of the humbled outcast, (2 Cor. ii. 11,) so much more these, when cast out from the presence of God. A captive taken by him that hath overcome him, the conqueror appears, and sets his foot upon him, especially if one eminent, whom Satan hath conquered.

Reason 5. Because of the intolerable and heavy wrath of God, which then doth seize upon the soul. Luke xvi., "I am tormented." In this life, though God be lost, yet men's hearts are comforted with creatures, and patience, and common bounty; as it is with scalded legs, eased in the water; but now when men are dead, then there is no creature to enjoy, to ease the heart; the body is dead, and what are these things to the soul? now hence the soul feels God is gone, and forever gone, and now when he hath most need, in great torment gone, the soul feels this, I say; and feeling this woe, it knows it indeed; the beasts

know their misery when they feel the knife in their hearts. Let men deceive themselves never so deeply with false imaginations, yet when they feel it otherwise, it shall confute them, as the generations of men in the days of Noah; men will have some hope while patience lasts, but when that is gone, then their hopes and hearts sink also: whiles men be in the vessel, they hope to live; but if that sink, and they can see no plank nor shore, but see waves, and men crying, etc., now their hearts must needs fail them.

Use 1. Of terror to them who, upon clear conviction from the word, will not believe their doom, their misery now. Sometime the word comes so near men, and the very sin they live and lie in is pointed at, found out, and words and thoughts opened, as if somebody had told the minister of the man; and they think he speaks against me, but they will not believe that sin is so black, or God so angry, but hope well; but if they do slight and regard not these convictions, yet, O, remember the time is drawing on, and it is not far off, but therein you shall know, the word of the Lord is more precious to him than to you; you let it fall, but the Lord will not. 1 Sam. iii. 19. The old world would not believe Noah; the Lord therefore made their experience convince them of it. I know men may be deceived, but as he said in another case, the word is not bound; so the word, which, like God, searcheth the secrets of thy heart, and thy hypocrisy, that is not deceitful; thy scepter, O Lord, is a right scepter, and it can not be crooked and bent. And if man doth condemn thee, know it, God is greater than man; and it is his glory to confirm the words of his servants, that are not diviners, soothsayers, and uncertain prognosticators of men's destinies, (Is. xliv. 26,) but having their warrant from the word, it shall be confirmed by God himself; nay, that very word shall arise, though it sleeps now; the word is only left as a witness, (Matt. xxiv. 14,) and do you think it shall not be so? if Christ lives, he will confirm it. Is it not better to know your condition now, and be humbled for it, seeing else you must know it when it is too late to know it? If two have a quarrel against each other, and the one who hath the better side entreats to agree with him, to acknowledge his fault, be humbled, he will forgive him, before he comes to higher courts, where it will be tried and himself cast, and such a fine and damages be set upon his head, as will utterly undo him; is it not a misery for such a one, so brought under, to feed himself with hopes, and not to listen till he hath spent all, and is utterly undone and beggared? truly thus it is here; and so I end with reminding you of the speech of God to Eli's sons, (1 Sam. ii. 25,) "They heard not their father, because God

would slay them;" so here, you will not hear ministers condemn you, because God will do it.

Use 2. See the great folly of those who having got some false comforts, and are loath to know the worst of their estates now; (Is. xxx. 10,) that say to the prophets, "Prophesy deceits," or if not, they will not come to the light; (John iii. 20,) or if light come to them, "they hate it," and put it out, choke it, if they do not also hate the man. Shall you know your estate hereafter, and will you not see it, nor the hounds, because it sees not them? so it is here; what will it profit you to hide your eyes from the Almighty's search, who can not hide yourselves? It is true, if there was no hope now, then men might comfort themselves, and not die with thoughts and fears of it till they come to die; but there is hope: O, folly not to see it now! and truly this is men's frame.

1. Because some think it a shame to begin now, after they have been so well thought of, now to strip themselves.

2. Because of trouble, men naturally will avoid it, and hence skin their sores over superficially.

3. Because they think it impossible, or very difficult, to be saved now, if all should be naught that they have done already; and hence rather hazard all, and put it to the venture.

4. Because they must maintain their innocency and confidence. What, must I not believe nor hope well?

5. Because, when they have done their best, they can do no more than what they do now, viz., trust to God's mercy.

But more particularly this appears, —

First. When men will not see, nor desire the Lord to reveal their sin and deceits. Ps. xxxvi. 3. That is one part of heart-flattery, not to see to do good; a gracious heart is broken off from flattery: he knows it, and hence will to the Lord: when he knows not himself and his estate, Lord, teach me: the damning sin is some dear sin; a sin which the soul allows habitation, and house room, and heart room unto, and hence it will not see it, because it would not part with it; and hence it saith, it can not see it, because it will not: it is in love with the flattery of it; and hence it is strange to see some that live in oppression by unlawful prices, and exacting immoderate wages, can not see their sin, though privately and publicly spoken of, because they will not: can not see it, because they will not: it is strange to see how time servers will defend their fashions; and they can not see it, because the heart is secretly in love with such vanities; and it is just, seeing they love not the truth, they should be deceived by errors. Two ways men have to hide their sins from God himself.

1. By covering them with reason; a man that is ashamed of his nakedness or sore, he will get a covering for it; hereby one may know what a man's chief sin is, viz., by his reasonings for it; as one may know where the eggs be, by the hen's sitting upon them; and truly, a little reason will blind the eyes many times; nay, though God and Scripture be brought in; Balaam would fain find out some light from God to curse, and from altar to altar he went, etc., but found nothing; thus here, etc.

2. By covering them with duties and sorrows, and yet keeping them; for when men do see their sin, and it is great, what do they therefore? they wash it with tears, they confess it as those, Is. lviii. 5, 8; they fast for strife or debate; they would be vexed with enraged consciences but for these duties; and this makes them hope well; and here come in those distinctions, I have sins as others, but I mourn under them; O, but remember, those sorrows destroy sin by little and little, and do not feed sin; but these ease thee in thy sin; (Hos. x. 4,) "Hemlock grows up in the furrows; you speak words," saith the Lord, etc. So here, etc.

Secondly. When men are willing the Lord should let them see their sin, but unwilling to attend him in the use of all means for that end; especially these two.

1. Diligent watch over the heart daily, by frequent reflecting upon its own acts; it is strange to see what discoveries might be made by observing ends, aims, motives of workings: hence Christ beats much upon this.

2. Daily meditation, in some solemn manner. 2 Tim. ii. 7, "Consider what I say; and the Lord shall give thee understanding;" it is a thousand to one if men do not lose themselves and souls in neglect of this. Hag. i. 5, 7, David said, "I considered my ways, and turned." Now, to say, Let the Lord search me, but not to use means, is to shut your eyes against the book, and say, Now, Lord, teach me.

Use 3. *Of Exhortation.* O, therefore, know the worst of your own hearts now. Phil. ii. 12, "Work out your salvation with fear;" saints with a fear of careful search, but you much more. Gen. xxvii. 11, 12. When Rebecca would have Jacob go to Isaac, saith Jacob, "What if my father feel me; I may get a curse then." So the Lord Jesus (believe it) will feel thee; he will see who thou art before he let thee into heaven; if thou art a stranger to thy sin, and Christ, and his grace, thou shalt see the gate shut upon thee hereafter; therefore know it now how it is with thee; nothing will be such a cut to thy heart as this, viz., when it is too late to see the sin which ruined. O, this will torment! as it doth politicians when they see, There I forsook a

rule of policy, there I was mistaken; if I had carried the business otherwise there, then I had got this; O, it troubles them; so it will do you, when you shall see your projects and hopes dashed.

Quest. How shall I know this?

Ans. 1. Mark what other godly and discerning speak or fear concerning thee; for though God reveals not a hypocrite to all, yet it is seldom but it is to some or others; (1 Tim. v. 25,) not speak against, yet not give full testimony.

2. Mark what conscience speaks, or fears thee with in cool blood, without getting those fears quenched by fresh application of Christ's blood; it is said, the fears of the wicked shall come upon him; there are some hot pangs which men have, and then think well of themselves, but generally live out from God and Christ. Mark which way the scale turns, when you are still; the worm that is not killed will gnaw forever, if it bites now.

3. Mark what troubled thee when afflictions were upon thee; then God many times convinceth men of folly; when Benjamin's sack had the cup, "The Lord hath found out our iniquity," said they. Gen. xliv. 16. So some evils may be falsely imputed; but then you shall see some other sin, (it may be,) for which the Lord may have had long a controversy with you.

4. Mark what thou art when crossed; many a one is good, while men and God please him; but when reproof comes, or he is crossed, then he is mad, harebrained, hateful, scornful, wilful, (Eccl. x. 11,) for men may be crossed of their will, but their own ends they will not be crossed in; mark how you deny your own ends in what you do, then you may appeal to God indeed.

5. Mark your temptations, and corruptions, with opposition; if all be quiet, either there is a truce for a time, or else there is peace between you and sin and Satan, and so war between God and you.

6. Mark thy opinions; sometimes, saith Solomon, a fool is not known till then, (Prov. xvii. 28,) for they arise (unless some in simplicity) from some corruption.

Quest. 2. How may the saints come to be settled that they may know this?

Ans. 1. Beware of contenting yourself with any measure; but with Paul "reach after things before," etc.; for hence the foolish virgins were deceived; but after all fillings be ever empty, hungry, and feeling need, and praying for more, setting thyself against all sin; say with David, "Cleanse me from secret sins."

2. Strike at the root of all sin, viz., your evil natures; mourn daily under it, and the activity of it; and though some

sins be unknown, yet when the root dies, they shall die. Is. lvii. 18. When you mourn for this, God will speak peace.

3. Be sure your end be right, that having received Christ, and doing duties, you do them before him, and for his sake; for here hypocrites fail; and this makes Paul to appeal to Christ; (2 Cor. v.,) "Depart, ye workers of iniquity," will Christ say hereafter; you have sought yourselves in all this: Though the duty is hard, and thy heart loathe to come to it, yet say, "For thy sake, Lord, I love it."

Observ. 2. The earnest cries and prayers of unregenerate men, at death or judgment, are then too late to procure mercy from the hands of Christ. If there be any means in time of distress to have help, it is by prayer; it helps the saints out of deep pits, dark dungeons, (Lam. iii.,) and iron furnaces, bitter agonies, intolerable pressures; by this means, though they shall use it then, because their torment is great, and their self-love remains, as these virgins did, yet it comes too late then; I know their prayers differ, but of that I shall speak hereafter.

Reason 1. If in this life sometimes they come too late, much more after this, but so it is sometimes; (Prov. i. 28; Ps. xviii. 41; Prov. xv. 1,) even unto the Lord. The Lord sees it meet to give a taste of his severity after life, and in this life, that men may fear, and the terror may fall upon many.

Reason 2. Because then Christ sits upon the throne of judgment, and so no Mediator to help them, as hath been proved; and if it be so, "how shall they stand?" Ps. cxxx. 3. In this life mercy waits, and patience bears, till it can bear no longer, and then doth ease itself, (Ezek. v. 13,) and cries to justice, etc. And, therefore, the prayers and howlings of the wicked are to no more purpose than of a malefactor before the judge condemned for treason.

Reason 3. Because their cries are but only howlings, (Hos. vii. 14,) only rising from their own torment, because the Spirit of God is quite gone, and if the Lord should hear, they would be as bad again as ever before; if mercy should save these thieves from this gallows, they would cut the throat and stab the heart of mercy afterward, as all such persons do, who are carried from that principle in their prayers; and, therefore, let them never look to be heard now.

Use 1. Hence see the exceeding greatness of the wrath of Christ, to them that die without him. Ps. xviii. 41. Many times the Lord hides his face from his people for a time; but then they pray and seek his face again, and the Lord hears them, and shines upon them again; when his Spirit in them speaks to him,

his Son in his covenant speaks unto them; and the Lord hears the cry of their weeping, as well as their praying. Ps. vi. 8. But if when they pray earnestly, and the Lord hears not them, but is angry with their prayers, O, this is bitter to them, (Ps. lxxx. 4, 5; Lam. iii. 44;) it is that which Christ typically complains of. Ps. xxii. 1, 2, 4, 5. There is no wrath like this; for a God so pitiful as many times to help without cries, more than a mother with tender bowels, and not to regard cries, as if he had cast off his nature: this makes wrath and sin bitter to the people of God; and, indeed, this is the reason why the Lord gives his people mercy; but it is by means of prayer usually, that they might see in what favor they are in his sight above others, that when he seems to be averse from hearing, yet prayer will turn the wheel, and Jacob prevails over God; and hence, (Ps. ii.,) "Christ shall have all nations for his possessions;" but yet ask of me; as Herod said, when he said, "Ask of me," to half of the kingdom, etc. And hence exceeding wrath is shown, in denying for a time to hear prayer many times; now look upon the condition of poor sinners dying without Christ; they shall then cry, and cry earnestly, and yet not prevail; if the wrath of God did break out at this time, and lie heavy, and the Lord say, Now cry, and I will deliver; it was no such sorrow, though bitter enough, to lie under wrath one moment; but to cry, and cry vehemently, Lord, Lord, and never be heard, O, who can bear this? their torments are intolerable; hath the Lord no pity? their cries are many, and hearts are faint; hath Christ no bowels? hath this Lamb no more meekness, gentleness? Yes, that there is; but such is his terror now, they are shut up from you; and so shall ever be, though you shall cry, and weep as many tears, and more too than the sea hath drops; and when you can not come before his face, the gate being shut, you shall cry, that the rocks and mountains may fall upon you to hide you from this wrath of the Lamb; and you shall then cry, Behold, and see, if ever sorrow were like mine! but all shall be in vain.

O, therefore, see the greatness of this wrath, so as to see the bitterness of any one sin, which stands yet between thee and Christ, which though it be sweet under thy tongue now, yet when the day of thy anguish shall come, it shall shut up Christ's heart from hearing all cries.

Use 2. *Of Exhortation.* To persuade all men to take their season of praying now. Is. lv. 1 with 6, when the Lord cried, "Come to the waters," etc., and because they might plead, hereafter; O, saith he, "Call upon him while he is near;" there will be a great gulf between you and Christ, when you are dead; now,

therefore, when the Lord comes in his word especially, cry unto him for help and pity.

You will say, There is no great need, thanks be to God, of pressing men to prayer here; who is so profane but doth? he is not worthy to live, or to enjoy the benefit of the sun, nor fit to live among the society of men, who dares not do thus, but to live among bears, and wolves, and beasts in the wilderness. I would to God there was no need to press this point; but truly, the country being a place filled with discontents, which ever keeps from prayer, because the devil is in them; and also of great peace and rest; hence, here men are more apt to sleep, and grow secure, than in any other place of the world; and the spirit of prayer is ready to die, even in God's own; and hard it is for this incense to be sweet, without some fire, some affliction thereunto.

1. Some there be, that do not so much as feel their misery at all, neither sin nor wrath; and hence they can not pray at all; they are not in so good a case to pray as the damned, who feel their misery, and cry out under it; these cast out of God's sight, yet having hope, and so should pray the more, and so cry out under it, yet can not; though the earth groans under sins, yet their hearts are hard, and they can not feel them, and so can not pray; and they quiet themselves with some forms, and their coleworts twice sod, and some cold prayers morning and evening, and hope that these will serve the turn, and here is all the comfort they have; nay, not only so, but if others that know their hearts better, and so pray longer, reprove them for it, they sinfully reply, What! you are like the Pharisees, that think to be heard for their long prayers. O, the Lord gives many up to this spirit of slumber; their hearts are heavy, and can no more lift them up than a stone.

2. Some there be who feel their misery, and go unto the Lord with many cries and prayers, but yet herein behave themselves like Saul, when God answered him not, then they forsake him; and like them, (Mal. iii. 14,) "What profits us that we have walked mournfully?" and thinking they shall not find, they build their cities as Cain did, and ease themselves that way.

3. Some there be that do not give over, because they think they shall not find, but ease themselves by their very prayers, pray out their prayers, and confess out their confessions, and mourn out their sorrows; and are compared to the dog, who easeth himself by his vomit; they are troubled, and then prayer easeth them, and when a little ease, then prayer is done, as Ps. lxxviii. 35, 38.

4. Some that have no ease, yet have no leisure, nor time; as many servants; and men greedy of the world rise betimes, and work hard, sleepy at night, that they can not have leisure; and when conscience asks, Why do you not take time? this is their excuse; O, but can not you take it out of your sleep, and lose your life, rather than lose your seasons of prayer? they hope hereafter so to do.

5. Some that have leisure, yet their hearts are dead; they can pray and stand convinced of misery; but I say, their hearts are dead. Is. lxiv. 7, "None stirreth up himself;" nay, sometimes as a man asleep, when the fire burns round about him, yet he feels it not. Is. xlii. *ult.* They can vex, and be discontent when crosses and afflictions come, but no heart to pray, or lay their condition to heart. O, this is sad and fearful.

I beseech you, therefore, take your time now; you must and shall pray.

1. Do you think ever to have mercy without seeking it, and praying hard for it? No, if ever God intend good to thee, if an elect vessel, thou must pray; yea, and glad you may have such an invaluable privilege, and that you are alive to do it. I know the Lord is found of them that seek him not; seek, therefore, in time now, before it is too late.

2. Do not say the gate is shut; no, it is yet open, and that by the blood of a Mediator. Heb. x. 19, 20. So that when you object God hears not sinners, yet, (Zech. xiii. 1,) "there is yet a fountain opened, for to wash in for sin and uncleanness;" all thy sins can not shut it, because it is opened to wash away sin.

3. Do not say, If I had a part in Christ, I could then be encouraged to ask. I pray, what think you of that woman of Samaria, when Christ spake, "If thou didst know and ask, he would give thee living waters"? What did the poor woman of Canaan do, when Christ himself told her, she was a dog, and had nothing to do with children's bread? when you have no promise to assure the Lord will give, yet the glorious bounty, and riches of his grace, may encourage you sufficiently to seek.

4. Do not say, But it may be I shall be denied, let me pray never so long; I know you are worthy to be denied, and as you have cried, the Lord should not hear, and as you have abused grace, it should cry against you; why should you quarrel? the Lord owes thee not straws; but yet remember the parable of the unjust judge, who heard a woman, a stranger when importunate; and this is found a sure truth; it is with all men praying, as it is with women in travailing; either their pangs will deliver them of their burden, and so they live, or else they will be their death;

if they cease, and give over, then they die. Prayer will deliver you of your sins, unbelief, or whatever stands between Christ and you; or if not, they shall die, and perish. Sow your seed of prayer, it will multiply, if it be right seed, until your harvest be great, and your gain unknown; security will fall on a hypocrite, before he gets the blessing, and the cares of the world will choke his prayers.

5. O, therefore, follow the Lord. Hos. vi. 6, 4, "You shall know him, if you follow on to know him;" especially if you be truly wounded, though he hath been as a lion to you. Is Christ so glorious, his presence so sweet, his kingdom so great, his mercy so rich, his inheritance so full, and wilt not thou pray, awake one hour? hath Christ bought mercy with his blood, and wilt not thou spill thy blood? Nay, not spare and spend thy poor prayers to beg it, (it may be praying time is declining apace,) and so get it; and by that means hear Christ Jesus say, Come, O, come, thou blessed, that hast been praying, weeping, following me, and take thy crown, and sit down on my throne; O, it will be a cut to think, Had I sought it, I had had it! Ps. xxiv.

Use 3. Of thankfulness to the saints, "that the Lord hath given them hearts to seek the Lord in a finding time." Ps. xxxii. 5, 6. Time was thou couldst not pray; but the Lord hath found thee out, and stirred up unutterable groans here, and all thy groanings have not been hid from the Lord.

Object. But many pray and find not; how shall I know I have found?

Ans. When the spirit of prayer, not the gift of prayer, hath carried thee. Rom. viii. 27.

Quest. How shall I know that?

Ans. 1. It is not fervency; 2. Nor looking to Christ and his mercy; 3. Nor arguments that are evidences of this spirit; for these the foolish virgins had. But I shall show it in three degrees.

First. Observe what is the utmost end in prayer, and so hath been in all thy prayers; it is certain all the prayers of unregenerate men, though enlivened with some common gift of the Spirit, are ever for themselves; if any outward calamity befalls them, they then pray. Ps. lxxviii. But it is as Pharaoh, for themselves, because the plague is upon them; if the word meets with them, and troubles them, their prayers (if fervent) are only for ease; when their bones are broke, it is for peace and comfort; and if they desire grace, it is for peace; if they have peace for the present, and feel blindness, hardness of heart, they think these will damn them; and hence salvation and deliverance from

misery is the utmost end they aim at; and so in all their prayers; let men study their hearts, and they shall see themselves the mark they shoot at, and the God they serve, and idol they worship in all their prayers; and do you think these shall be heard? No, no! but saints they look not at these things chiefly, but their utmost end is another thing; at first conversion it is much self, but it turns in time to higher ends, etc., and that is, What though I have peace, salvation, these loaves, but yet miss of Christ himself, and the life of Christ, to live by him, and live to him, which is our last end! 2 Cor. v. 15. And here all his prayers end, though crooked many ways; else these are the prayers of that Spirit of life which are ever heard; and hence, (Jas. v. 3,) "Ye ask and have not, because you ask to spend it on your lusts." Is. lviii. 5, though they fasted and prayed, yet it was for "strife and debate;" the saints do it to destroy their lusts; and hence, though all fervent prayers are not of the Spirit, yet all prayers of the Spirit, you may observe, are ever fervent, though expressed with chatterings, mournings as doves, because the last end hath a mighty force with it; and hence waiting on God in all means for answers, follows; and hence prayers of the saints are endless, *Appetitus finis est infinitus;* hence, (Rom. viii. 23,) "life in heaven" is his scope, and he is longing for it, glad of that time, (for all prayers of hypocrites are but issues of self-love,) and all occasions do but quicken up that principle; so all the prayers of the saints rise from the spirit of love to God, and faith in him. Rom. viii. 27, 28. The sonlike Spirit, or Spirit of adoption, not servile, is in them.

Secondly. If the soul receive any thing from the Lord praying, it is exceeding thankful; the Spirit of Christ, wherever it is, glorifies Christ, (John xvi., and Ps. cxvi. 1,) and that in time of peace; hence, (Ps. l. 14, 15,) "Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows, and then call, though in time of trouble, and I will hear." For the Lord to begin to do the soul any good, and show it its misery, the worth of the Lord Jesus, to give him any heart to seek, to give him any hope, to give him the least hint by any word of mercy; O, its heart melts, (it should be thus,) and wonders but to think, nay, to see the Lord hath answered him! O, this swallows him up, makes him give all to the Lord, as Hannah did, when she had her child. 1 Sam. ii. 1, 2. Esau lost the blessing, though he begged it with tears; he had a profane heart that did not esteem it indeed, and so would never have been thankful for it; poor Jacob gets it, though he had but a staff to hold him up.

Thirdly. If it receive not answer, it mourns, and loathes itself,

justifies God, gives all to him; prayers from self-loathing are not prayers which come from self-love. Ps. xxii. 2–4; Zech. xii. 10; Ps. lxxii. 12. There the Spirit dwells in the poor and contrite, and their cries are heard; when men pray, and want, and are quiet without wishing they could lament, it is not from the Spirit; O, therefore, try here if it is thus, as he said to Hezekiah, "The Lord hath heard thy cries, and seen thy tears;" and, O, wonder at the Lord, that he should give thee a heart to cry now.

Use 4. Reproof to saints, who, though received and heard, yet think the Lord regards them not; and as David, think his mercy is shut up.

1. Remember former times, (Ps. lxxvii. 7,) your experiences of the Lord's pitying thee in thy blood, and he will not cast thee off now.

2. Consider the riches of grace; when you can not find any thing past, but what might cause him to loathe thee, yet the Lord may then love, when thou art lamenting thy vileness. Is. lxiii. 15, 16.

3. Consider the Lord doth purposely seem to disregard thee sometimes, not to shut out prayers, but to make thee pray better; not that you should not pray at all, (Judg. xvi. 10,) but to make you seek and follow him, though in the dark. Lam. iii. 45, with 55, "In a land of pits; eye hath not seen what God hath laid up for you."

4. Consider, there is as much in the Lord to move him in thy worst estate to help thee, as in the best, viz., "his mercy." Ps. vi. 4. You say, If my heart was not so vile, if I had not committed such sins, the Lord might; this is as if you said, The Lord shows not pity only for his mercy, etc.

Ver. 12. *I know you not.*

Words of sense, in Hebrew, bear and signify affection also; the principal affections are love and hatred. Hos. vii. 2; Rev. viii. 12. In this place such knowledge is meant, which hath the affection of love joined with it; so that it is as if Christ should say, I love you not, I delight not in you, my heart is not toward you, whatever good words you give me, and however your heart is toward me, or you have thoughts of me; and this is the great misery of foolish virgins.

Observ. 3. That it is a most heavy and dreadful misery not to be beloved, not to be known of Jesus Christ; for now when the tables are turned, and the stage is pulled down, and the foolish shut out, and when Christ himself would give them a doleful

answer, express in words their woe, he coucheth it under these; "I know you not:" I do not say that men do feel it so, but it is so; and at last it will be found so.

This may appear, if we consider these particulars.

Consideration 1. If you consider the exceeding greatness and glory of his place and person; he is exalted, and set at the right hand of God, upon the throne of his Father, and his dominions reach from sea to sea; he is King of kings, and Lord of hosts of angels, etc. Phil. ii. 9. "A name above every name" he hath, and God hath sworn, "To him shall every one bow." Now, being thus great, and not to be beloved of such a one, is heavy; if we want the love of poor men, and base, ignoble spirits, it is no such matter; but to lose great ones' favor, especially if we depend upon them in life and goods, peace and honor, this is bitter; hence, (2 Thess. i. 9,) "from the glory of his power."

Consid. 2. If you consider the terror of the wrath of God for time to come. If a man be abroad in the fields from home, and no storms, nor colds, nor heats arise to hurt him, a shelter would not be so much prized, nor the loss of it great; but if there be such, and then to want it, and to lie open to the injury of all weathers, now it is a woe to want it. So I say to you, men that are abroad in the wide fields of this world, and gone from home, if there should never be misery, but might eat your bread and drink your wine with a merry heart, and rejoice in your wives, and there then should be no knowledge of any thing after death, as those epicures spake, (Eccl. ix.,) the love of Christ would not be so sweet; but there will be storms, scorching heats that shall burn, and never be quenched; there will be colds which shall blast all your buds, and blossoms, and beauty, etc. Now, to have no love of Christ to take yourself to, as to a shelter in these times, is very heavy; hence Is. xxxii. 2. Christ, typified by Hezekiah, shall be a shadow in a weary land, which is spoken to show the sweetness of his love, and their blessedness to have him to fly to; and hence their woe who want him. It is said, (Gen. vi. 8,) "Noah found grace in God's eyes;" not in the eyes of men; for before the flood came, they did not see it such a favor for to have an ark; but when that came, and they fled from houses to trees, from trees to mountains, and waters beneath and above prevailed, now they saw it something to find favor in the eyes of God, and their woe to want it. Moses dies, wondering at the happiness of the saints, in regard of this. Deut. xxxiii. 26 and *ult.* The eternal God is thy refuge; he foresees storms, he preserves from miseries above head, so as they can not touch the heads of the saints; if so be they do fall, yet they can not fall so

low, but underneath are his arms; as a child which stands alone, if it be in danger to fall, and others cry out, Pray take heed, I have my arms, say they, under it; hence Moses dieth with this word, "O Israel, who is like unto thee? happy art thou!" then woe to those who want this; there is not one man living, but he shall meet with extremities, which shall make heart and spirits to fail, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken; every thing may forsake you but Christ's love; but if that also doth, woe then to you.

Consid. 3. If you consider the power which this privation of love hath to damp all joy and mirth in all things present; it envenoms, and puts a sting and poison in all blessings, and makes comforts torments; to have all blessings, and all privileges, and not to have Christ's love with them, is to have a snare, a trap, a stumbling-block, and a recompense, etc. Rom. xi. 9. Men regard not wrath to come; but consider of this, thy blessings are woes, curses; and you shall one day cry, Woe is me that ever I was, or that I had any blessing! Suppose a man should be enriched with bags of diamonds, hung with chains of gold, fare deliciously, but condemned to die, this would damp all. Pharaoh had a stout will, Moses tells him. Exod. ix. 16. "For this cause God hath raised him up to show his power upon him;" one would have thought it should have pulled him from his throne, and made him lie in the dust; it did not, because God hath hardened his heart; so would this, if the Lord hath not hardened yours.

Hence we shall see saints, when they lie under false fears, only of loss of love; those very things which are most sweet are made most bitter. Ps. lxxvii. 3. "I remembered God, and was troubled;" but what think you of those that be not indeed loved? it is enough to bring down the most merry heart, and highest looks for the present; what are my friends, mine enemies? is there none to comfort me of all my lovers?

Consid. 4. If you consider the sweetness of this love of Christ. I will instance only in one particular. Ps. lxxxiii. 3; Cant. i. 3. The elect, when they are glorified, and with Christ, what shall be most ravishing in their eyes? what shall swallow up their thoughts most? O, the love of Christ, his free love! why should I be accepted, beloved? O, that ever the Lord should cast his eyes, and set his heart upon such an outcast! hence, praise of the riches of grace (Eph. i.) is "the work of heaven." Now, to be cast out of this love, will, must be exceeding bitter to the soul; hence, (Matt. vii. 23,) "I never knew you," will be daggers at the heart, or the stone upon the grave's mouth, which shall torment forever.

Consid. 5. If you consider the nature of this want, or negation of Christ's love, what it is.

1. Degree. Is for Christ not to have so much as one purpose, or thought of peace and good to them, not to put the least character of their names in the book of life; that is the first degree and fountain of all other; "God's love." Jer. xxix. 9.

2. Degree. Is not to speak one word of peace and love to a man, no absolute promise of life to them. Ps. l. 16. They have nothing to do "to take God's covenant into their mouths;" those promises which comfort and support the hearts of the saints against all sins, all miseries, belong not unto them.

3. Degree. Not to suffer for them, not to shed one drop of blood for their lives, (John xvii. 9,) so that all their sins must lie upon them, to bear and answer for.

4. Degree. Not to do the least good for them; good things they have but through their sins, and Christ's ordering of it, are not good for them, but they are thereby fitted by patience for destruction.

5. Degree. Not to accept any thing which they do to him; their sacrifices and prayers are sins; (Mal. i.,) "I have no pleasure in you."

6. Degree. Not to pity them in time of their trouble, but to laugh at their calamity, and to rejoice in their ruin and eternal overthrow. Christ shall get glory from them then, whom they despised so long before.

Use 1. This may let us see what cause all the people of God have to be abundantly satisfied with the love of Christ; the heart of man is naturally like the raging sea, never quiet, if the least winds do but arise; the saints may have unmortified affections, and are very apt, upon troublesome temptations, to be disquieted; the saints are compared to the apple of God's eye, and we know little things will trouble much there; it is because in losses and sorrows which befall themselves, and in beholding the madness and folly of others, they are very apt to look upon the anger of the Lord in them for their sin, which others usually do not. O, consider, is it such a misery to lose Christ's love? and have you a share in it? O, then, be thankful for it, and contented with it. When Christ was to depart from his disciples, (John xvi. 22,) "you shall sorrow;" but what doth he leave with them to quiet them? "I will see you again," that mourn now for loss of my presence; what else? doth he promise them nothing else? truly that is enough. When David looked upon the prosperity of the wicked, and that they should "never see light," (Ps. xlix. 15, with 19,) "But God will redeem my soul

from the grave, not from troubles, and he will receive me;" some read it, "for he hath received me;" both may stand together, and this was enough to him.

If a traveler have lost his way, and not come home to his journey's end, he may be very well unquiet; but when he is come to the end of his journey, and can go no farther, then he sits down and lives there, and would not go back again; especially if he considers how many are out of doors, and under tempests, he may now bless God he hath a shelter: so if the Lord had never revealed his grace to you in the gospel, and you had miseries upon you, then you might be unquiet; but now when laid in the bosom of Christ, when sucking the breasts of the grace of Christ, when you can go no farther, though thou wert in heaven, for there is no other happiness there, now sit still contented, and be glad of this, as under thy vine and shadow; especially considering the woes of them that are yet far from his grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, and under clouds of blood. Men that sail upon the sea, if they see nothing but waves, and vast raging of waters about them, they keep themselves close in their ship, though their cabins be but little: tell me one thing that is good, where Christ's love is not; show me any thing but misery, death, and eternal sorrows out of it; O, therefore, sit still, quietly, meekly, contentedly, though you be tossed as high as heaven, and go down as deep as hell again.

You are troubled sometimes with losses of outward things, cattle die, and Rachel's child and husband are not, increase little, decays many, and Job's wife bids him curse God (and give glory to him, by confessing he is a hypocrite, because so much afflicted) and die; and David sees the ungodly flourish, and he thinks he hath washed his hands in vain, and it is good to fare and live here as they live. O, consider, suppose the Lord should give thee these things as he doth to others, to be snares, and at last say, "I know you not," when thy soul shall come trembling out of a sick and weary body, before the tribunal of God Almighty, as these, was that portion then so good? O, therefore, take your portion, and be thankful for it! O, therefore, be glad in this, and say, I have these miseries, but Christ's love to sweeten them! these sorrows, but Christ's love to sanctify them! I see floods of fire arising, but O, here is this shelter to be refuge to me!

You have heard what it is not to be beloved, what a misery it is; by that contrary, see this, viz.,—

1. For the Lord to have thoughts of peace to thee, when thou wert nothing but death and misery before his eyes, to bear thee in his heart ever since he was God.

2. For the Lord to speak to thee, and make an eternal covenant, and every promise thine. David's dying words are, "This was enough," even all his desire; and not one tittle but shall be accomplished one day.

3. For the Lord to shed his blood, bear thy sins, curse, and tread down death and sin, and tear away the handwriting of the law against thee, rather than the least evil befall thee.

4. For the Lord to be working for thee by all good things, all evil things, all providences, all ordinances, night and day, and you may find it in part, and shall find it hereafter.

5. For the Lord to accept all thy poor endeavors, desires, prayers. Is. lvi.

6. For the Lord to pity thee in all thy misery, and worst times, then to show his greatest love, when death and powers of darkness put forth their greatest malice! truly thus it is. O, let this love be enough, considering especially the woful condition of them that want it, who shall cry for one smile, and can not get it! See this love, and doubt not of it; how could you love him, if he did not love you first, especially if you had been satiated with it? "Pray for it." Ps. xc. 14. I speak this the rather because of the sad miseries which make men lame in their Christian course, that they are ready to lie down disconsolate, because they remember not this. Do not always doubt, but once at last get through the crowd to this love.

Use 2. Let those who want this love mourn for it, though the Lord gives you, and doth for you never so much in regard of other things. Suppose he doth not smite thy body with sickness, thy name with disgrace, thy estate with losses; yet if he doth not love thee, this is woe enough. It was the misery of Israel, (Jer. xv. 1, with 5.) "My mind is not to this people; cast them out;" and as the Lord there said, so I say; if the Lord deal thus, who shall pity thee, or bemoan thee, or ask how thou dost? Joel i. 8–10. They lament when the fig tree was wasted, much more now the Lord's love is not toward thee. Lam. i. 16. The church there laments, that the Comforter which would refresh was far off.

Quest. How shall I know that?

Ans. If he never did affect thy heart with loss, and want of his love, and abusing of it, but hath let you go on in peace all your life; you were born out of his love, cast out to the loathing of thy person, and have lived so, though he hath been pitiful to thee; now, if you were never troubled with loss of this, and wrongs done against this, you are as yet out of love. Look as it is with a father; if he hath a child froward, and can not

restrain him, he lets him alone, he loves him not, else he would chastise and correct him, and make him shake at his frowns; so here, (as it is Heb. xiii. 8,) "If no correction, you are bastards;" so here you have gone on, and never have been yet troubled in mind with the frowns of Christ, never lamented your wrongs done to Christ; are you loved? I know the Lord may let you go prodigals for a time, but he will bring you back if he loves you. I never knew any whom the Lord brought home, but this broke their hearts. O, that the Lord was so patient, and I all my life abused him! nay, he would oft have gathered me! he did oft strive, and I was "like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke," (Jer. xxxi. 18,) and he might have cut me off, or given me up to my stubborn heart. Many are troubled for want of memory, ignorance, and want of power to pray, or some sin, and then God is merciful to them, and this eases them again; but this is nothing, till you come to this, viz., fear of the eternal loss of his love; and this lies heavy. If this be thy condition, that for the present thou art not loved of the Lord, tell me but one thing which thou hast to comfort thee; thou hast friends, peace, health, but they are all without love; if without love, then thou hast them with a curse, and wrath of God. Suppose thou wert dying, and the Lord should say to thee, when thou criest, I know thee not; would it not be sad? Lie upon thy pillow, and sleep quietly if thou canst; for aught I know, there was never drop of blood shed for thee, never thought of peace in Christ's breasts to thee; a vile wretch that never lamented the loss of his love, nor contempt of it to this day!

Object. But I care not so long as I have been well without it; so I hope I shall do still; I will not believe I am out of his love.

Ans. Yea, this is the misery of men, as it was of these virgins; but time shall come, when you shall see him sit upon his throne, brighter than a thousand suns, in the glory of his Father, a fire burning round about him, and the kings of the earth trembling at his presence, and his saints in his bosom like unto him; then you shall wish you had his love, "and lament," (Rev. i.,) "and wail, because of him." O secure world, will you sit still in your sins, and lie in your unbelief, till the fire burns about you, and there be no escape? O that the Lord would pity you, many of you that have yet lived with dry eyes and merry hearts, and yet have no love from Jesus Christ!

Use 3. Learn hence not to despise or refuse the love of Christ, when it is offered to you, and propounded to you in the gospel; we can be content to want the love of some men, because we can live well enough without them and their love;

their love lost hurts not us; but if the loss of their love may be the loss of our goods and lives, then (if it may be had) men will seek for and long for it, though it should not be offered; but if offered, it is gladly accepted. So, if you could live without the love of Christ, you might content yourselves; but the loss of it is more bitter than ten thousand deaths; and therefore refuse it not when it is offered; but as they, (Acts ii. 39, 41,) when they saw how they had imbrued their hands in the blood of Christ, and yet saw grace offered, it is said, "They gladly received the word of the Lord."

The law is a word of condemnation; but that is not the last word the Lord hath spoken; then I should spend time in vain now; the gospel, even the whole gospel, is a word of love and reconciliation, (2 Cor. v. 19, 20,) wherein the Lord doth "beseech men to be reconciled," i. e., to accept of God's love offered therein.

The Lord knows full well that men's hearts are so full of enmity, that they will never seek for reconciliation first, though they have good cause, because they have offered the wrong; and therefore he stands not upon terms, but offers love first, without which he knows they are forever undone! O, therefore, receive it, accept of it when it is offered to you; and lose thy life rather than lose his love.

For the further opening of this point, I shall show three things: —

1. That Christ doth offer his love in the gospel; and how.
2. Upon what terms.
3. Motives to accept it, and answer objections against accepting of it.

First. That the Lord doth offer, and how he doth offer his love in the gospel; and this I shall clear, because nothing can draw the soul to accept of love but this. For the better understanding of which, you must conceive that the love of Christ in the gospel is diversely manifested unto men; either to men after they be in Christ, and are brought home by it, and this is a love of delight in them. Ps. xlv. 10, 11. Or it is love of good will to men not brought home; as it is in husbands, before their affections be set upon any, they make love; (as it is 2 Thess. ii. 10,) "They received not the love of the truth, because the truth made love to them;" (Luke ii. 14,) "Good will toward men;" and this love, I say, is offered; this love the Lord makes unto you; stand amazed at it, that after all your sins, wrongs done him, nothing but love is offered, even his dearest love; for though there is patience, power to help, wisdom to guide, though

there is terror in him, yet, "Take my love," saith he. John iii. 17. And hence (Heb. ii. 3) it is called "great salvation," or "love;" it is offered, else how could men be said to reject it or neglect it, which he warns them of? A man may as well question whether there be a gospel, as whether love be offered there; for as the law is nothing but the manifestation of sin, the handwriting of death unto all men, writ with the finger of God, the gospel is the manifestation of grace, the handwriting of grace and peace to all men, written with the blood of God, and hence the gospel is that which brings "life and immortality to light." 2 Tim. i. 10. / Not that there is life absolutely for all, but there it is for all that shall by faith accept of it. More particularly, —

First. It is offered universally to all wherever it comes, and therefore personally to every man; the words are plain, (Mark xvi. 15,) "Preach the gospel to every creature;" and not only to them that do belong to Christ, and shall believe; for though it be offered with the power of it effectually to these, yet offered it is also unto those that never shall have God; and hence (Luke xiv.) the Lord of the feast invited those that never came in; and Christ himself, (John i. 11,) "He came to his own, and they received him not;" he would have gathered them under his wings, and they would not; not only to them that be humbled, (though none will care for the gospel but such,) but to them that be unhumbled, (Rev. iii. 18, 20,) doth this gospel come. There be many object. Yes, the Lord offers love to them that are his, but not to me: yes, to thee; there is not a man here that can exempt himself. And I would make no doubt to go to every man particularly, and say, The Lord entreats thee to be reconciled; nay, if there be one man worse than another, though his hands have been imbrued in the blood of the prophets, and his soul stained with the most crying guilt of the most hideous sins that ever the earth bore, or sun saw, yet the Lord makes love to him; the price is paid for him, if he will accept of it, and that the Lord would have him so to do: neither doth this universal offer infer a universal redemption; for the gospel, in the offer of it, doth not speak absolutely that Christ hath died for all, and therefore for thee, as the Arminians maintain, but it speaks conditionally; it is for thee, if ever the Lord gives thee a heart to receive that grace there; therefore consider of it; there is not one here present, but the Lord would have you receive his love; and consider this one reason, thou shalt be condemned for refusing it; hence it is God's command, and Christ's desire, you should receive it. John iii. 19. / If not thy duty to receive it, it is not thy sin to refuse it; but it is such a

sin that all men that perish under the sound of the gospel are principally condemned for.

Secondly. It is offered really. I put in this, because men can not see the reality of this; because not Christ, but ministers (they think) only make it, and so the offer is only external and ministerial; the Lord himself, they think, is not of that mind.

Ans. 1. What any minister according to the gospel doth, that Christ would do if he was here present; hence, (2 Cor. v. 20,) "We beseech you in his stead;" as embassadors speak what the king himself would do, and no more, and himself would speak what they do if he was present; and hence Christ did not only preach the gospel to his elect, that should receive him, but to them who did reject him also, which made his blessed heart and eyes also break forth into tears, "O that thou hadst known," etc.

2. It is Christ in them which doth speak; (Heb. xii. 25,) "Him that speaks from heaven;" and hence, (Eph. ii. 17,) "He came and preached peace," when he was gone up to heaven; and hence receiving of these ministers and embassadors of Christ is receiving of Christ; despising of them is despising of Christ; and look as the bowels of God the Father's love are opened in Christ, so the bowels of Christ's love are opened in those whom he sends. Never didst thou see any minister pity thy condition, and offer peace to thee, but because Christ put it in his heart; and as, in rejecting the gospel, you shall not sad their spirits so much as Christ's Spirit in them, so in accepting, *e contra.*

3. Your life and salvation, and certainty of mercy from Christ, hang upon your receiving their word; for men will say, If Christ were here, I durst believe his word; I tell you, the Lord hangs thy life upon believing their word spoken according to him; (John xvii. 20,) "I pray for them that shall believe in me through their word;" why not through my word? *Ans.* These may stand well together; my word as the foundation, their word as building upon it; their word in the external administration and view of man, but my word indeed; my word in their mouths, and so their word as instruments under that principal agent; so that if an angel, or one should rise from the dead, I should not look for more certainty of life by believing these than them. Christ will speak no more till he shakes down heaven and earth with his voice; but their word he honors, and saith, Believe it; their word is not, Christ hath loved thee; but, Believe, that thou mayst be beloved of Christ.

4. The Lord is so real here, that he punisheth men more for

this than if he was present. Christ lived among the Jews, and preached; they crucified him, and rejected him in his person; yet this cast them not off, till (Luke xiii. 46) they put away the offers of grace by the servants of Christ from them, and now the apostles are to shake off the dust of their feet against such as those.

Thirdly. It is offered with vehement desires to accept of it; (2 Cor. vi. 1; Ps. lxxxi. 11,) "We beseech you receive not God's grace in vain;" for you may say, There is some offer, but the Lord desires it not in good earnest: never did man desire to get the affection of another most beautiful, as the Lord doth thee that hast none; we use to judge of the affection of another to a thing, by what he is willing to part with for it; as he that sold all for the pearl, and bought it; so the Lord is content to part with all he hath to thee; the dearest thing he hath is his precious blood, and all fruits and benefits of it; his Spirit to comfort, himself to dwell with thee, his Father to love thee, his kingdom to receive thee, his sweetest promises to assure and stablish thee; all things, except his glory; it is not fit that you should receive that, but for him to receive it from thee; and giving it to him is better than having of it to thyself. To thee I say, that art like an incarnate devil, dead and damned, and undone forever, unless thou accept of this grace, is all this mercy of the gospel tendered.

Fourthly. It is offered freely. Is. lv. 1, 2. For this makes many stand and wonder, Why should the Lord make love to me, so vile, so unworthy, good for nothing but to sin? dry bones! or what need hath the Lord of me? what can I do for him? what can I add to him? Why goeth he not into the palaces of princes to call in them? But that he should deal thus with me that have sinned worse than Paul before conversion; not ignorantly; I have known the grace of Christ, yet rejected it; and have gone on desperately, have been mad in following my lovers, forsaking the Lord: True, I know no cause, but only his free love, because he hath compassion on thee, and because it is for his grace's sake; hence he desires it vehemently; for that is worthy to be honored, received, embraced of thee. Methinks it is in this case as it is with poor mariners, whose ship is wrecked, many drowned, and they cast upon the shore; one comes to them and offers them house, and meat, and home; they tell him, We are poor men, have nothing to pay: True; I know that, but I have compassion upon you, because I see you are distressed men; so it is here with the Lord Jesus; I know thou hast nothing to requite me, but I have compassion upon you; accept my

grace, take it, live upon it, because thou art a distressed soul; God hath shown wondrous mercy in giving life; now, I offer more, one would think; now, surely men should be glad to accept of this grace.

Quest. Upon what terms is this offer of love made?

Ans. There is nothing required, but only and merely receiving of it. John i. 12. Under the law it was, "Do all this;" but the gospel saith not so, but, "Receive me, who have done all, and suffered also," with thy whole heart; as it was in the land of promise, nothing required, but going up, and possess it; here it is no more. Prov. iv. 8, "She shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her." The offer of love is like the offer of a rich portion, nothing required but receiving it thankfully, and so living upon it; so, (Ps. xvi. 5–7,) "I thank the Lord that gave me counsel," etc. Or as it is in the offer of a prince to a traitor, he offers life to him; upon what terms? I could crush thee as a fly between my fingers, but I desire nothing; only accept my favor, come and embrace me, and then live under my government in my kingdom, because that I love thy company, and because here is my honor, and thy safety; so doth the Lord in the gospel; the Lord professeth he had rather a soul should return. "Come under my wings," saith Christ, (Matt. xxiii.;) "you may all." I would have you safe, and near unto me, that you may feel the warmth and life of my love; this is all the Lord looks for, and who would not accept of love upon these terms?

Thirdly. Motives to accept of it. Why should I name any more than what the text mentions? no woe like this to lose it; and though it may be now you may esteem it nothing while it is fair weather, and whiles it is a day of patience, yet when the depths of anger are broken up, then you shall see, and say, no people like unto those that have it, when you shall see Christ on his throne with ravishing beauty, and see him tread the wine press of wrath alone, and his garments dipped in the blood of his enemies; then you shall say, the want of this love is bitter; and hence, if it be offered, take it now gladly, thankfully, joyfully.

Object. But I am but one; will the Lord receive me?

Ans. I have been stirred up to preach the gospel for the sake of that one; and, (Jer. iii. 14,) "I will take one of a tribe." Though all else be rejected, the Lord minds thee.

Object. But Christ is in heaven; how can I receive him and his love?

Ans. A mighty prince is absent from a traitor; he sends his herald with a letter of love, he gives it him to read; how can he

receive the love of the prince when absent? *Ans.* He sees his love in his letter, he knows it came from him, and so at a distance closeth with him by this means; so here, he that was dead, but now is alive, writes, sends to thee; O, receive his love here in his word; this is receiving "him by faith." Acts ii. 37, 38.

Object. 3. But I am not elected, nor redeemed; if I knew that, I durst receive the Lord and his love.

Ans. What have you to do with God's secret decree of election? it is your duty to look to the gospel, which is the will of God's command; there is a will of God's decree, and a man may fulfill this will and sin; as Jeroboam in revolting according to the prophecy of the prophet; and to submit to this is not moral obedience, though moved thereto by a divine instinct, as in Cyrus; but there is a will of God's command, and this you are to look to. *Ans.* True; but it may be thou art redeemed; and therefore do not crucify Christ a second time; receive this love, and it is certain it is for thee.

Object. 4. But I am not humbled sufficiently.

Ans. I know no man can receive Christ till the Lord hath humbled and broken him down; but know, there is no more humiliation required, than that which brings thee to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Many have a spirit of cleaving to, and receiving of Christ, as hath been opened, but are kept off, because they fear they are not humbled; but methinks the very offer of Christ to one condemned and lost forever, who must else lie to all eternity mourning, (methinks this) should break thy heart, if it be not a stone and a rock, as it did Paul's; indeed, you must be more and more humbled all your life; but this is a consequent required of those who are in Christ.

Object. 5. But I can not believe; why press you me to it?

Ans. 1. The Lord doth not press you to believe, because you should believe from yourselves; but that feeling your own inability, you might suffer him to make you believe.

2. The Lord by words of exhortation doth work faith; there goes a power with it; as, (Acts ii.,) "Repent;" they gladly received the word; and whose heart may it not draw and compel, especially if there be any spark of God in any soul? and therefore pray give the Lord leave to speak, whose word can quicken the dead, though the dead can neither stir nor hear.

3. There be many of you that say you can not believe; but this gospel draws out a power. "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright." Prov. x. 29. Will you, can you despise or refuse his grace? no, it should constrain.

Object. 6. But I have received, and I feel no virtue from him.

Ans. 1. I know many do receive him, and feel not the virtue of Christ; but because saints may be kept poor in spirit, possess all things in Christ, and yet receive little from Christ, I shall only ask two questions.

1. How dost thou esteem of and desire that blessing of Christ? Dost thou esteem of nothing so precious, desire nothing more, and followest the Lord on with prayer for it? it is in Christ for thee; what thou wantest, thou shalt have it. John iv. 10; Phil. iii. 9, 10. No false heart but undervalues these things, and the Lord will fulfill all thy desires; in heaven thou shalt have all thy sins subdued and trodden to death.

2. How is thy heart for thy general frame, affected with the absence of the good thou feelest not from the Lord? dost thou mourn bitterly for this? look as the disciples that mourned for Christ's bodily absence, the Lord tells them, "They should rejoice;" so here a carnal heart is indifferent, though he lose Christ's virtue. And, therefore, accept the Lord's love, you poor mourning souls; the most stony heart I speak to, but much more unto the weary, and them that have been seeking after the Lord; behold, salvation is come to thy heart this day; only let it in, do not reject it, because thy sins are great; the Lord knows them, yet he offers: some of you have had some hopes or assurance Christ is yours, yet he may be thine: suppose he was never thine yet, now stretch out thy shaking hand, receive him who is this day crucified before thy eyes, his head hanging down, his blood gushing out, beseeching thee to accept of this which is shed for thee. I remember a godly man receiving apples from a poor woman; he took them thankfully, but said withal, this came from the Spirit of God; so doth this offer much more, and therefore take it. But I know this love will be despised by some of you, some not knowing your woe, some not feeling it, being without Christ. Had the Lord no purpose to do thee good, and I knew thee, I would read thy doom; but the Lord may pity, and therefore I will go and mourn, and pray that the Lord would not lay your sins to your charge; your base lusts are better than Christ to you; O, therefore, mourn for this, you that know him not, prize him not, but carry this (Acts xiii. 41) about with thee, viz., "Hear, you despisers, and wonder," etc.

Observ. 4. That many men may, and do apprehend Christ by a seeming faith, whom yet Christ Jesus apprehends not by his dearest love.

For here were virgins many of them, who cried, "Lord, Lord," only looking for salvation from him, hanging upon grace, clasping about his feet, (as it were,) and who in their lifetime

went out to meet the bridegroom, expecting love from him; and yet Christ here professeth, I know not you, I love you not.

I say, this is by a seeming faith; for no man apprehends Christ by a lively faith but is apprehended of Christ. John i. 12. But if it be by a seeming faith, i. e., which seems to be faith in the judgment and opinion of others, and also which seems only to be so to their own apprehension, as it did unto these virgins, the Lord doth not apprehend such by his dearest love; and that is, I say, with his dearest love: with common love he may, but with dear and eternal love never.

The faith of some men is like the casting of some anchor at sea; it sometimes falls upon a rock, or light sand, it toucheth the ground, but the rock holds not it, and hence the ship is ever driven before the wind, or carried away with the ebbings and flowings of the water; so it is here; and hence men are tossed to and fro with lusts and temptations, and driven before strong winds. Or as it was of Saul to Samuel; he apprehended Samuel, but Samuel departed from him, saw him no more until the day of his death; so here, the kingdom and love of Christ is rent from you. John ii. 24, *ult.*, "But he committed not himself to them." Luke xiii. 26, 27, "Have we not eat and drunk in thy presence?" and yet Christ will say, "I know you not;" and this is the case of many. Job viii. 13, 14, "When a hypocrite dies, his hope perisheth;" if the Lord had apprehended him with his dearest love, it could not be so.

For explication of this point, three things are to be opened.

1. How one may be said to apprehend Christ Jesus by a seeming faith.

2. How Christ is said not to apprehend such.

3. Why he doth not.

Quest. First. How may one be said to apprehend Christ by a seeming faith?

Ans. Five ways, usually.

1. When men are forced to fly to Christ merely out of extremity and pressures of misery, the strokes and dry blows of divine blessings light upon them, and now they cry, Lord, pity us; it may be, in time of peace, while conscience and divine vengeance were asleep, they regarded not faith, nor prayer, nor Christ, nor any thing else, notwithstanding all the heartbreaking cries and loud calls of God, but were merry, and light, and licentious, etc.; but in extremity, then they will cry, and prize mercy above a thousand worlds. Prov. i. 28. One would think their mouths should be stopped then; some think those words are an allusion to the ark in Noah's time. Hos. viii. 1–3,

"When the eagle shall come against God's people," (Ps. lxxviii. 35.) "They shall cry, My God, we know thee;" no, saith the Lord, "The enemy shall apprehend them," I will not; this is not faith, but only self-love; when as men are naught before, and their hearts sitting loose from God continually, having no daily embracements of him, and would be worse after God's afflicting hand, if he should help them; but so it is, that they cry out to God for help, merely because of torment, etc. This is like that cry of our Indians to the devil, who worship and cleave to him because he plagues them. True, in times of extremity, the faith of the saints may be awakened which was asleep before; and when God hedgeth their way with thorns, they may then return to their first husband, because it was better; but when extremity begets it, it begins and ends with it, lives and dies with it; here such may fear that then Christ apprehends them not. Ps. lxvi. 3, "Because of thy power, thy enemies shall submit." A proud, rebellious wretch, in times of peace, swells bigger than God, and is above God; the Lord Jesus hath his times wherein he grapples with them when no ministers can, and flings them down with his sword at their heart, and his hand at their throat, and terrors in their consciences; and now they yield; Christ may hence take these as common subjects, but never as special favorites to stand before him; and this is the case of thousands, who fly to Christ merely for extremities. Thus the case stood with old Joab; he should have died before, (1 Kings ii. 30,) but at last he neglects his charge, he runs to the altar only out of self-love, and there he will die; one would think a man that had been so useful flying to the altar in his old age, might be pitied. No, the altar which secures others secures not him; justice may be shown to him that will abuse favor long; so it is here.

2. When men fly to Christ in times of peace, that so they may preserve their sins with greater peace of conscience; so that sin makes them fly to Christ, as well as misery, not that they may destroy and abolish sin, but that they may be preserved in their sins with peace. For this is the frame of all men living; sin before it is committed (not all sin, but what is suitable to men's constitutions, corruptions, places, temptations) is very sweet, and if conscience be awake, it is after the commission bitter; sweet in the mouth, bitter in the belly, or else they know it will be bitter another day; Prov. xxiii. 32, "stings like a cockatrice;" and what profit in inheriting lies? now because men have not; hence many a heart secretly saith this, If I can have my sin, and peace, and conscience quiet for the present, and God merciful to pardon it afterward, then all is well; hereupon

hearing those that put their trust in Christ shall be pardoned for present, and saved afterward, hence he doth rely (as he saith) only on the mercy of God in Christ; and now this hardens and blinds him, and makes him secure, and his faith is sermon-proof, nothing stirs him, etc.; and were it not for their faith, they should despair, but this keeps them up; and now they think, if they have any trouble of mind, the devil troubles them, and so make Christ and faith protectors of sin, not purifiers from sin, (which is most dreadful,) turning grace to wantonness, as they did sacrifice; so these would sin under the shadow of Christ, because the shadow is sweet, (Micah iii. 11;) they had subtle sly ends in good duties, for therein may lie a man's sin; yet they lean upon the Lord, etc. Matt. iii. 7, 8. The scribes came in peace to John's ministry, which was to awaken men to believe in the Messiah; "O generation of vipers, who hath forewarned you to flee from wrath to come!" hence, saith he, "Bring forth fruits;" as if he should say, You would have the blessing of the warm sun still, but you care not to have your viperous nature changed; you will bring forth the old bitter fruits, etc.; when money-changers came into the temple, you have made it a den of thieves; thieves when hunted fly to their den, or cave, and there they are against all searchers, and hue and cries; so here; but Christ whipped them out; so when men are pursued with cries and fears of conscience, away to Christ they go, as to their den, not as saints, to pray and lament out the life of their sin there, but to preserve their sin; this is vile; will the Lord receive such?

I am persuaded many a man's heart is kept from breaking and mourning because of this; he saith (it may be) that he is a vile sinner, but I trust in Christ, etc. If they do go to Christ to destroy their sin, this makes them more secure in their sin; for (say they) I can not, and the thing I would not do, that do I, and Christ must do all; whereas faith makes the soul mourn after the Lord the more, as Paul did; yet do you think they that believed said, "Let us sin that grace may abound"? No, no.

3. By seeing some glory, and tasting some sweet in the gospel, and Christ manifested and arising therein, hence some men may apprehend Christ neither out of fear of misery, nor only to preserve some sin; but God lets in light and heat of the blessed beams of the glorious gospel of the Son of God, and therefore there is mercy, rich, free, sweet, for damned, great, vile sinners; Good Lord, (saith the soul,) what a sweet ministry, word, God, and gospel, is this! and there rests; this was the frame of the stony ground, "which heard the word, and received it with joy, and for a time believed." Luke viii. 13. And this is the case

of thousands that are much affected with the promise and mercy of Christ, and hang upon free grace for a time; but as it is with sweet smells in a room, they continue not long, or as flowers, they grow old and withered, and fall; in time of temptation, lust, and world, and sloth is more sweet than Christ and all his gospel is; it is in this case with the soul, as with Mary who applied the spikenard only to the feet of Christ, but all the room was filled with the sweetness of it; so in the gospel the sweet odor of it is scattered to all; and the apostle Paul saith, "We are a sweet savor of God to them that perish;" but Christ only applies it unto the heart of a wounded, poor, humbled sinner; and though smells and odors refresh, yet men can not live by the smell; so it is here; such is the rich grace of Christ, that the worst shall know and say, he is good; as the king passeth by, many come to see him; but doth he take all up to the chariot with him? No, but they go home to their several houses again, and then they commune, and speak of what they saw; so Christ accepts only of, and apprehends none but those that have forsaken all at his call, and so live upon his favor; so here, (as Ps. xlv.,) all his garments smell of myrrh, yet only the queen which hears, considers, and forgets her father's house, stands at his right hand.

4. When the soul is persuaded to close with the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of immediate revelation, without the *medium* of the word, the word, they grant, hath its use, and it is good to attend to it, as to a light in a dark place, but stay till the day-star arise; the word is obscure, and may deceive, but this can not, and they think Christ never apprehends them, till this doth; and this some feel, and rest upon, as upon a light and comfort in sickness, and leave others to the word; some feel and hold no other evidence but this; some hold it, but never felt it, but live in admiring of it, and it is a pretty new thing, etc.

I confess the Spirit must reveal the meaning of the word, before ever it can draw any to believe, and it must mightily, immediately apply the word; but for Christ to reveal himself without a word, and a word of promise in the gospel truly understood, is a delusion, especially if the evidence of the word be herein despised. Rom. xv. 4. Paul had revelations; so may a godly man have more than common manifestations of favor at some times; but Paul speaks not of these, (Heb. vi. 17,) "that we might have strong consolation," etc. All the heirs of the promises, as heirs that have legacies left them, they go to the will of the deceased father, and that comforts, that they hold to, that is sure, such a one shall have it, if his name be there; but if one shall

say, Such a one hath promised me such lands; is it in the will? No, but since he died, as I was taking a pipe, he came to me; O, be not deceived! but say some, I hold to the will, let us see where is it? I love such and such, saith the Lord; true, but whom? It is children believing, broken, poor, humbled. Now, if you say, No, I regard no such will, then you regard not the Lord; so it is here; (Eph. ii. 20,) "Built upon the foundation of the apostles," i. e., upon the word, and Christ in it, etc. Hence, if you build without the word, you build without a foundation, and you will fall; and do you hold to that comfort that the word never gave you? Christ is not the object of faith, but as revealed; (John vi. 45,) "He that hath seen," etc. Christ is not revealed, but in his word of the gospel preached; all your conceptions without it are idolatrous and monstrous; you neither see nor apprehend Christ, nor Christ you.

5. By closing with Christ upon false signs of grace; there is a company of people, if they have but some pangs, and some reformations now and then, they are presently Christ's, they hope, and if they be like unto all other good people, and do as they do, now all is well. Thus these foolish virgins did deceive and delude themselves; they were virgins, they were like others, and they thought well of them, and hence they fell to have hopes, out of some slighty work of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus; but they are, in the interim, strangers to the life of God, and Christ, and grace; these should have looked to have oil in their vessels before now.

Secondly. What is it for Christ not to apprehend such, and to withdraw from such?

Ans. You may know this by the affirmative. What is it for Christ Jesus to apprehend? Consider a soul drawn home to the Lord Christ to believe; there are two things he doth apprehend his people by. As,—

First. By an eternal covenant of grace, which the Lord makes and enters into with a poor sinner, whereby he binds himself forever to be his, a God unto him; we can not make the Lord apprehend us, (as in 2 Sam. v. 1–3.) But by his covenant he binds himself unto the souls of his people, (Is. lv. 2, 3,) which is a mighty strong covenant, as strong as God's purpose is, for it is nothing but God's purpose revealed. Now, this the Lord reveals usually two ways.

1. In the word, without the conscience knowing it, so as that a man hath not assurance of God's good will to him. And,—

2. To conscience; and this two ways.

1. By prayer; the soul being instant with God to reveal his

good will, the Lord doth it; (Ezek. xxxvi. 37,) "I will yet be inquired of for this," etc. Zech. xiii. 19. Hence the Lord asks the poor heart, Will nothing content thee but the Lord? I will fulfill thy desires then, the Lord hath heard thy cries, all thy sins shall be pardoned, all those corruptions subdued, etc.

2. By the ministry of the word; when the soul hath been froward in seeking the Lord, but now mourns under it, that it can not find the Lord, the Lord professeth, I will create the fruit of the lips peace. Ps. xxv. 14, "He will show them his covenant," etc. So that the soul is for a time stablished and supported by these and the like blessed words of grace from the Lord.

Secondly. By an eternal Spirit of life, which (as from Christ the head) comes into every member, and is in them, and shall be in them, never forsaking them, though it be grieved a thousand times in a day by them: this Spirit sets on the covenant, and gives the first fruits of glory, etc. Is. lix. *ult.*, "This is my covenant, my Spirit shall never depart," etc.

Thus Christ apprehends his, herein differing from Adam; he was next to God, and was apprehended by God. But, 1. It was by a covenant of works. 2. As a first cause, upholding, and preserving, and governing the second; but this Spirit which should never forsake, this he had not; now, when by faith we are turned unto Christ, Christ apprehends us with both these arms. Now, *e contra*, you may see what it is not to be apprehended by Christ.

Reason 1. Because they were never given unto Christ in vocation by the Father's drawing. John vi. 65. And Christ takes hold on none but them; they are apprehended for their Giver's sake, though they be worthless in themselves. All lawful marriage is by parents' consent; so here.

Reason 2. Because he knows the vileness of such men's hearts, lying in their sin, the falseness, deceits of them. John ii. *ult.* As we use to say, Such a one! No, I know him well enough.

Use 1. Of sad reproof to those who never trouble themselves with any thoughts whether Christ hath apprehended them; if they have once apprehended Jesus Christ, they never question whether their faith so apprehend Christ, as that Christ apprehends it. O, consider! these virgins they did thus after a sort apprehend Christ all their life; but now they know Christ never loved them, because they never savingly apprehended him. I remember, (Is. iv. 1,) "Seven women shall take hold of one man, and shall say, We will be called by thy name, to take away

our reproach, but we will eat our own bread;" so many take hold upon Christ, Lord, let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach; when as they care for no part nor portion in Christ, but they will eat their own bread, live upon their own lusts. It was Christ's speech upon divers that saw him, and followed him, (John vi.,) as to his disciples also, "Except you eat my flesh you have no life in you." What doth a man aim at in eating? not only that he may have bread in his hand, but he examines, what virtue hath it? His end is, that it may grow one with him, and be turned into the same flesh with him, and so that there may be a most near union that can be; so should all Christians study that, and aim at that, that the Lord may be nearly united to them, and grow one with them; a gracious heart prays and mourns for want of this.

O, there be many that profess, What should I trouble myself with this and that grace? when I have done all, I can but look up to Christ. True, but will you not yet try whether you so look to Christ, as that he looks toward you? John x. 10, "I know mine, and am known of mine;" there is a world of false faith in the world. Jer. vii. 8. When they cried, The temple of the Lord, saith he, "Do you swear, lie?" etc. So I may say, Are you slothful in carriage, discontent in families, live in secret adultery, and your eyes and thoughts are full of it? do you break your promises, and covenant with God and men, and forget the Lord in a land of peace, care for little but that your plow may speed, and your names may rise? and do you cry, Christ, Christ? go to Shiloh, go to the Palatinate, Bohemia, and see what God hath done; O, but I am better! O, but go to these foolish virgins, let their dead ghosts affright thee, if the Lord's word can not make thee search here.

A man drowning, all his care will be for hand to take him; so would you if all were right; but you will not so.

Use 2. *Of Examination.* Whether ever the Lord Jesus hath apprehended you with his dearest love, as well as you have apprehended him? 2 Cor. xiii. 5. In all covenants among men, whereby they are to bind themselves one to another, men will make it sure on both sides; Christ will make you sure to him; do you see that he be also made sure, and fast bound and united to you.

Methinks the consideration of the example of the virgins might awaken every one unto it; for if this was the frame only of some rude, profane rout of carnal Protestants, professing Christ with their lips, but denying him in their lives, it might be excusable for us; but when virgins, and so many, and that in

these times of Christ's coming, to fail here, this may strike a holy awfulness even in the best; and with much fear and trembling to search themselves, as it did the disciples of Christ, when they heard not many, but one only should betray him; for there is this union on both parts. John x. 14.

2. But though there is cause to search, I confess it is very hard to find out this blessed love-knot, the union between Christ and the soul being so mystical, and secret, and spiritual a work, especially in this life; wherein the Lord Jesus ariseth in the souls of his people, not in his perfect fullness, but only as the daystar, at which time there is much darkness before the rising sun; and hence the apostle, (Gal. iv. 9,) "You have known God, or rather are known of him," etc.

3. But yet it may be known; the many examples I might alledge might prove it, and the promise of Christ to his disciples doth evince it. John xiv. 20. They were weak for a time, and Christ forsook them, and left them very sorrowful for a time; but saith he, "I will come to you again;" yea, and they might be never a whit the wiser for that; nay, (saith he,) "At that day you shall know I am in you, and you in me;" as a child can not tell how his soul comes into it, nor, it may be, when, but afterwards it sees and feels that life. So that he were as bad as a beast, that should deny an immortal soul; and it is an article of our faith; so here, etc.

4. And truly when it is known, it is exceeding useful, if a man was never apprehended by Christ, that now before he be cast out of sight and reach of Christ, he may (if possible) get the Lord to apprehend him; and if he hath been apprehended, he may be supported in sad combats, and comforted against all fears of apostasy from the Lord, but may know he stands as fast as Mount Sion that never can be removed; for times of spiritual assaults are to destroy faith. Ps. xxii. 8, "He trusted in God, let him deliver him;" and therefore you had need make sure of this; time may come, that to sense and feeling, hope and heart may fail; what supports now? yet Christ doth not, Christ will not, Christ can not.

Quest. How may this apprehending love on Christ's part be known?

Ans. In these five degrees of it, it manifests itself, for it is unknown in itself; but in the manifestation of it, there it is seen of us.

1. Degree. When the love of Christ apprehends the soul effectually, it overcomes the soul by sense of love, and thereby draws the soul from the strongholds and bondage of sin to

Christ; wherever there is exceeding dear love of the one unto the other, it is of an overcoming nature; and though Christ doth threaten, or terrify his people sometimes, yet the end is love; the love of Christ is of a winning, overcoming virtue; and he overcomes by love; and where he sets his heart on any, he will sooner or later overcome by love (if he can) the hearts of his, to forsake all other lovers, and cleave unto him. Jer. xxxi. 3, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" what follows hence, "I have drawn thee;" how? "by loving kindness." Cant. i. 4, "Draw me, and I will follow thee;" this is the prayer of all those whom the Lord espouseth to himself; and it is as if they should say, I have neither strength nor heart to come nor follow: my iniquities clog me, and my fears discourage me, etc.; but yet, Lord, draw me.

Let a man believe in Christ, and accept the offer of Christ when he can; but he can never do it until his heart, averse to Christ, and unbelieving, be drawn to the Lord Jesus; and that not violently only by terror, but by stronger cords, even the cords of love, which persuades mightily the soul of unwilling to become willing; the Lord revealing the glorious grace and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and all the benefits of him, and therefore he offers this to it, and requires nothing but faith to receive it; this which stirs not the heart of another, overcomes the hearts of the Lord's own, even with a holy admiration at this grace! What, Lord, am I; so vile I am, and filthy, and hellish, after so long abusing God and grace, now to reveal, offers on such terms Christ and grace to me! O Lord, I am swallowed up with this kindness! how canst thou think such thoughts of love! yet I see it. Rom. i. 17, "The gospel is the power of God to salvation; for therein is righteousness revealed from faith to faith." And mark, it is such a drawing of love as pulls the soul from all the strongholds of sin to Christ; for that which the prophet complains of people in his time is true of ours; (Jer. viii. 5,) "They took fast hold of deceit, and refused to return;" they hold it as their life, and it holds them as fast as spiritual bonds of death; either the pleasure of sin holds them, or the power of unbelief in refusing grace, attended with sinkings and sadness of heart, or objecting against grace through pride of heart, when the Lord comes to apprehend it; hereupon the Lord Jesus Christ, *uno et eodem actu et ictu*, in drawing the soul to himself, draws it from the captivity of sin; thus, (Acts xxvi. 18,) "from darkness to light." 1 Thess. i. 9, and the soul saith as they. Jer. iii. 23, 24, etc. The Lord Jesus doth not so draw it to himself, as that at the

same time it abides in sin; nor so from sin, as that it abides without Christ; but *uno*, etc.

For I observe a double error in men's drawing to Christ.

First. Either they come only from misery, (I say only,) and so are rather driven than drawn to Christ; they rather come themselves on the legs of their self-love, than on the feet of faith. Now, when Christ doth effectually draw, he doth it by love; O, this meets, this draws, this breaks, this overcomes; and now, as we say in war, it is better to reconcile an enemy than to conquer him by force; because the one overcomes his power only, but the other overcomes his will; so Christ could crush, (and he doth bruise his people's souls with miseries; they would never else be suitably affected with the bruises of his soul,) but this makes way for love; he overcomes the will by love.

Secondly. Or else if love doth meet, affect, and draw them, yet it doth not overcome them, or draw them from the hold of sin, but as ivy clasps about the tree with a root of its own. I have known some that have been melted, affected with the patience and goodness of God toward them; that have been almost persuaded, and yet have turned almost devils afterward; the reason hath been, because they were never quite taken off their own bottoms. Now, a soul whom Christ draws, the Lord, in drawing him to himself, pulls him from his sin, so that he is weary of it; the sight of Christ's grace, O, this draws indeed! that now not only it dare not, will not, but can not live in sin. Rom. vi. 2; Tit. ii. 11, 12, "Grace appears to all; but it teacheth us, (saith the apostle,) to deny ungodliness;" ungodliness will be suing and seeking for love, but they deny it; the soul thus comes not unto Christ, without feeling of sin in it, but that the Lord would take away all iniquity from it. Jer. iii. 22. And because it fears there may be some secret evil, its care therefore is, that the Lord would strike the root of all, and make it more bitter than death, to its grave. The greatest evil of all is sin: it is greater than death, grave, hell; hence Christ's greatest love is redeeming first from sin; and as if there had never been sin, grave nor death should never hold; so when he breaks the power of sin, no power of Satan, world, death, shall hold thee from Christ; and it is never overcome by love till now. Let a man be in never such fears and troubles of mind, and sinkings of heart, and soon after he pretends to great joys, and assurance, but sin is not overcome; though it be snibbed and hid, yet it will overcome you at last, and would pull thee down from heaven if ever thou wert there; as if one that makes suit to another, and she is forced to give consent, but she hath her heart still to another lover, he

will never have her; not that the saints are really free from all sins and weaknesses, but they are free from peace with sin, though not free from war with sin till death; as when two lovers are fallen out, it is enough if the league be broken.

2. Degree. The apprehending love of Christ; it satiates, fills, and feeds the soul with the sweetness of itself, now the soul being come to Christ, and seeing the hight and depth of the love and pity of Christ. Ps. lxv. 2–4, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, he shall be satisfied;" the stony ground received the word with joy, was affected with the grace of Christ; as one that stands by where smells are; (but smells do not feed, for they may taste, but tastes do not feed nor satisfy,) so it is here. You know we feed on meat, that we may be strengthened thereby, and it may be turned to nourishment, and good blood, and flesh, and be made one with us; so Christ gives himself to be spiritually eaten by faith, out of an earnest desire that we may have a near union to him, and he to us. Now, the main end of eating is satisfying; and if a man be satiated with it, though he think it will never prove nourishment, yet it doth; so, where life is, etc. John vi. 56, "He dwells in me, and I in him."

If a man tastes not a greater good in Christ than in his lusts, he will fall to them again from Christ; but if he feeds on Christ, and is satiate with him, never can he hunger again; otherwise the soul will say, It was better with me once than now it is; Solomon, though he tasted all good of the creatures after he knew God, and God had appeared twice to him, yet he felt them fall short of what he once found, and at last he remembered his rest. When Abraham gave his children gifts, he did not lay hold on them with special love, but to him to whom he gave his inheritance and portion, this is special love; and when is that known? viz., when the soul is fully satiated with it. Ps. xvi. 2–4. And hence the prodigal, he did not know he should be received; but when he came, "Make me a servant, if not a son, (saith he;) and his father hung about his neck," etc.; so here; (Exod. vi. 3,) God hath two ways to satisfy his people.

1. By fulfilling his promises.

2. By manifesting himself, and that to their satisfying, as sufficient to do all what he hath promised.

O, consider of this, you that have seen mercy, but it hath not satiated you, nor doth yet! but you have other bread to feed on; the Lord never took hold on you.

3. Degree. This apprehending love of Christ, having thus satiated the soul, it constrains the soul to live and act for Christ. Now, what shall I do for the Lord? and the poor soul begins to

lament days past of folly; and secretly desires of the Lord, it might rather not live, than not live to him; and though haply it often serves sin and self, yet the soul accounts that life death, and so laments it before the Lord, (2 Cor. v. 15, 16,) "That they that live might live to him." John vi. 57, "He that believeth in me shall live by me;" i. e., both by me, and for me; and Christ apprehends the soul fast now; for Christ must rather lose his life, than lose this soul. Look as it is with a graft, put the scions close by the stock, tie it fast, if there it withers, and rather loseth life than gets it, we say, surely it is not put in right; for if it were, the living stock would convey sap and nourishment to it. So it is here; some herbs are very precious, but for ornament rather than use; so Christ is, but what use do you make of Christ? what life do you fetch from Christ? the least joint in a man's finger united to the soul, hath life of it; but signets, though near to the finger, yet they have no life, and hence no union, and hence no members; so the saints have life, though weak; but unregenerate men (as signets) may be near life, and near the true members of Christ that be quickened, but receive no life.

Gluttons will feed, that they may go to sleeping; others, that they may fall a-working; so, many take Christ, and get some peace, and then turn grace into wantonness, and so sleep in their sloth; but a gracious heart, all his prayers and feeding is, that he might have strength, and heart, to live and work for Christ. Hath the Lord pitied, pardoned? how, Lord, shall I now live in my calling? now his friends are by him pitied; now he is fruitful, and mourns when others be not so.

4. Degree. This apprehending love of Christ having thus constrained the soul, it ever follows it, "and dwells in it." John xiv. 17. For after Christ hath apprehended the soul, so as that the soul thinks it shall never be as it hath been before; yet, O, the lamentable decays and losses that it feels! it loseth favor and life too afterward, and lives against Christ sometimes, (a thing never to be lamented enough;) but mark, if Christ hath apprehended, he will not forsake the soul, though it hath forsaken him; and hence the Lord, by his constant assistance of the Spirit, recovers it again, brings it back again, and that after questionings, sometimes, if ever there was grace indeed in it; if not, yet, O that it should thus forsake the Lord! nay, the Lord sometime preventing before it was seeking.

Judas falls, the Lord never looks after him; Peter falls, Christ looks after him, and recovers him: all the disciples denied Christ, and fled after promise never to do so; yet, saith he, (Mark xiv.

28, 26, 7,) "I will go before you to Galilee; my Spirit is in you, and shall be in you, though you grieve it, and sad it." Adam falls, and one sin cut him from God's hold of him; hence he dasheth quite to pieces; but now Christ upholding on other terms; hence, though his people forsake him, yet he holds them still fast and sure, and keeps them from breaking utterly to pieces; nay, if they be as water spilt on the ground, he will gather them up again; he deals not so with others. John vi. 66. Many forsake him; being never given indeed to him, he lets them go; but Christ speaks to his disciples, "Will you go?" So if a man hath a stranger in his house, he will let him go, and inquire not after him; he came to me for a time; but if he hath a son, and he is gone, he will find him out; and there he wonders at a father's love, to see his spirit; so here: and hence come the saints to wonder at the Lord so much: "What, is not the Lord yet gone?"

I speak this partly to terrify those that go, and never return again, and to answer objections of saints; The Lord hath hid himself from me, and I have forsaken him; yet mark, he will bring thee back again to himself lamenting, etc.

5. Degree. This apprehending love of Christ, it now witnesseth love to the soul most clearly and fully; the question is, Doth Christ apprehend any but those to whom he witnesseth love? No, for he doth witness to all in some measure; but here comes the clear manifestation of it: When I was dead he quickened me, and since that I have lost the Lord, and he me, yet he hath found me out; and hence now the soul concludes, the Lord loves it. Gal. ii. 20, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." Ps. xxiii. *ult.*, "The Lord restoreth my soul; surely mercy shall follow me."

Now try if the Lord never dealt thus with thee.

Use 3. As this may serve to discourage or terrify those that never did, so it may encourage those to preserve their faith who so apprehend Christ as that they are apprehended of him; if a woman was never married to such a man, for her to call him, or speak of him, or think of him to be her husband, it is presumption; but when he hath given himself to her, then let her own her privilege, and maintain her claim against all law, and wranglers, and preserve her interest; so those that never were given to Christ, let them know their faith is but smoke and vanity; but let Job say, "Though he kill me, yet I will trust him." David (Ps. xlii. 3) had that temptation, "Where is now thy God? that his tears were his meat and drink," and was much shaken, and cast down by it; but what, doth he lie still? No, he stirs

up himself, and chides himself: "Why art thou cast down?" Verse 5, 11, "He is my God." 1 Tim. vi. 12, "Fight a good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life, whereunto thou art called."

It is very unsafe for any Christian to lay by faith, and cast off the exercise of it, because it is Christ's apprehending of us which doth preserve us; true, but it is by faith, which may not at all times be seen, as neither the other can; and therefore take heed you make not this use of doctrine here, because many may apprehend Christ, whom Christ never apprehended; therefore what have I to do to close with Christ? To be kept from putting out faith either in your judgment and practice, or practice only? I would but only ask of such these questions:—

First. If we were only to look to Christ's apprehending us without the other, why doth the apostle put such a weight on faith, as that all the benefits of Christ are communicated by it? Heb. iii. 14, "We partake of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast;" and Heb. x. 38, "The just lives by it," not from it.

Secondly. If so, why doth Satan so much strike at faith? when Peter fell, what did he strike at? what did he winnow him for? To shake out his faith; and hence Christ prays "that it fail not;" when Satan comes to Christ, the first thing which made way for all his temptations was, "If thou beest the Son," etc. Our blessed fellowship with Christ, he sees, consists of two things; faith on our part, and the Spirit on Christ's; and Satan strikes at the weakest first.

Thirdly. If so, why doth the Lord Jesus so carefully seek to preserve it? both mediately by all means and ministries, words, sacraments, which are to feed faith; and hence Paul, (1 Thess. iii. 2,) "To establish you in faith." And (ver. 5) he hence "rejoiced;" and, (ver. 10,) "We would be yours to perfect your faith." And also immediately; Peter falls, Christ prays "his faith fail not," his grace should not; and, (1 Pet. i. 2, 3,) "Preserved by faith to salvation."

Object. But I can not believe.

Ans. Before faith you can not; and after you do believe, the acts of faith, and lively working of faith, may be many times in desertions of the soul from God, or God from the soul, hindered; and when he hath those lively workings of it, it is from the power of Christ, that it is acted, as well as preserved; but yet if Christ hath once given power to believe, he maintains it constantly, and increaseth it; and therefore you have no cause to plead, I can not; so that you can not sin, and live in it, especially in unbelief,

and lie there; you can not draw back to perdition, but believe to the salvation of your souls; "the just lives by faith;" we say we must live; faith will be stirring when no other grace can be so; it victuals the whole camp, relieves the besieged, and is most strong when man is most weak. It is true, indeed, there may be many acts of presumption for one act of faith; take heed of that: that faith is not presumption, which the more it works the more humble it makes the soul to be, and vile in his own eyes; because as faith ever fetcheth of Christ's fullness to the soul, so it ever is attended with sense of emptiness in the soul, naturally, and then it is right.

Use 4. O, resist not the Lord Jesus, when he comes to arrest you by his almighty arm! In a shipwreck, if a man sees many drowning and perishing, never a hand to take hold of them, when one is reached out to them, will they resist it? O, no! I know indeed when the time of love comes, there is no power of overcoming and frustrating the grace of God; but yet there is a power of resisting, which the Lord complains of in them, (Acts vii.,) and which he makes his people to complain with bitterness of in his bosom when his time comes. Is. l. 2. The Lord cries out of his people when they had sold themselves into the hand of their enemies, and were apt to lay the fault on the Lord, as men do. Now, the Lord gives me not a heart to believe; saith he, Wherefore, when I came was there none to answer. *Object.* You can never pardon such sinners, help against such sins, mercy can not reach us. "Is my hand shortened?" No such matter. I do not press you now to apprehend Christ; but resist not the Lord when he hath his hand upon thy heart or conscience to apprehend thee. Is the Lord at work with none of you? are you forsaken of Christ altogether? There are many ways of resisting Christ thus; I will only name these two.

First. When the soul will not suffer the Lord Jesus to bruise, or cross its will, that so he may prevail over the resistancy of it. A strong arm, a strong man when his arm is bruised, or broken, or wounded, takes away the act of resistance; as taking away the very life from it, takes away the very power of resistance; so Christ would unite himself to the soul; there can be no constant union where there is constant resistance. Christ comes to take away that; hence bruises and wounds the soul: outwardly sometime in name, estate; inwardly in conscience, in heart. Now, here is men's folly, that they will not be humbled, when they hear of their estate in the word; they will not believe it is so, though they stand all the while convinced therein, as if they had been named: nay, they will not think of it; if it begins

to trouble them, or if they do begin, they think it is the temptation of the devil; and if their estates or names begin to die, they will not be poor nor despised; they had rather die than live in vexing and fretting rather than yield; they will have God's will bowed to theirs, not theirs to the Lord, nor yield themselves captives to his mercy, let him do with them what he will, who owes them nothing. Thus it was with Ephraim; Capernaum heard, admired, embraced Christ, but yet repented not; that was to live in the smoke and fire; woe to you, saith he, for it. Jer. vi. 7, 8. "Be instructed;" he saith not, instruct thyself, but "be instructed," be convinced, be humbled for thy sin, "lest my soul depart;" I am with thee to pardon it, yet to take it away.

Secondly. When they will not be gathered to Christ, nor come to him, nor receive his love when it comes to them, but put it far from them as much as in them lies. The disciples told Thomas, Christ was risen, but he would not believe unless he saw him; nay, unless he felt; nay, unless he felt his very wounds; Christ pities, and bears with the weakness of faith: "But," saith he, "be no more faithless, but faithful;" and hence saith, "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet believed;" this Christ complains of in the Jews, "He would have gathered them, and they would not!"

Now here resistance is made two ways.

1. By the will; when the soul sees the offer of love fair and full, but will not be drawn to close with it, because it knows whither to go and live, and be yet well enough without it. John vi. 68, "Whither shall I go?" It hath some other lovers to give it content; but loss of Christ's love is not for the present so bitter as death to him; because having of it is not life to him, because something else is his life; this is enmity of heart; and indeed the root is worse, (if worse may be;) you can find some pillow to ease you, when you refuse Christ's love to help you.

2. By the mind; the soul knows not whither to go, and yet the mind doth not, nor will meditate with fixed meditations on the grace of Christ; but pores upon its sins, and unbelief, and fears and objects strongly and continually against the Lord. Is. xl. 27, 28, "Hast not seen," etc. (Beloved,) it is with the mind as it is with burning glasses; hold them to the sun, and you gather and unite the beams, that they burn; so the soul by musing on Christ's love.

Object. Many say, I can not believe though I see a command for it, and God will not help me.

Ans. The fault is not here, but in this, you will not use this

means on musing on the gracious freeness, riches, and need of his love, (Ps. lxiii. 6, 7,) but on the earth.

Object. 1. You will say, I can not but resist.

Ans. Yet, I pray, give us leave to exhort you to believe; give Peter leave to persuade, (Acts iii. 3,) "Repent and be converted;" the Lord requires that only; it may be the Lord may go away from thy soul, and take his leave of thee forever; and if you did know, you would not crucify nor resist the Lord of glory; if you would consider, you would know.

Object. 2. I find my heart much affected and drawn, but then I am afraid of presuming; how shall I know when I may close with the Lord?

Ans. 1. When the merchant hath sold all, let him take the pearl, and enrich himself with it; the devil may grudge thee it, but the Lord doth not, will not.

2. When the Lord comes to draw, indeed, you can not but accept; your need will be so great, the offer so fair, love so abundant, and like the honeycomb dropping into thy heart before thou suckest it, and Christ so dear, that thou canst not tread upon him whom God hath smitten for thee. "Mary," (John xx. 15–17,) "stands weeping;" at last Christ appears, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she knew him not:" hence her heart stirs not; but at last he calls her by name, and then she knew him, and saw him present; "Rabboni," saith she; and now had she best apprehend? yea, she can not but embrace him; "O, touch me not as yet," saith he, etc.

Use 5. Of exhortation, to labor that the Lord Jesus may apprehend you; I know it is nothing but his mercy can move him to it, even to take away that resistance of your hearts; but yet hear his voice, as well as know his power, and harden not your hearts whiles it is called to-day, in use of means for this end. Ps. lxi. 7.

1. Consider your need of this. Is. xlii. 1, "Behold my servant whom I uphold." Did Christ need? Yes, Christ himself must be supported by the power of the Lord; (Ps. xl. 11, 12,) "Let thy mercy and truth continually preserve me;" and this was not only when sins swallowed him up, but when he had been preserved. Ps. xvii. 5, 6, "Hold up my goings." You are gone in a moment, if the Lord lets his hold go; you are kept in strongholds, in iron bolts, in invisible, everlasting chains, in the dungeon where no water is, unless the arm of Christ help.

2. Consider the benefit of it. Acts ii. 24, 25. It was impossible Christ should be held under pains of death, because of his princely Spirit exalting him; so here, Christ is and will be with

you, and when once he hath apprehended you, none can pull you out of his hands, no, not the Father's hand that was angry; and he will never cast away his, (John x. 29,) "when they come to him."

3. Consider how few find this. Is. liii. 1, "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed, and who hath believed our report?" both joined together, the arm is Christ, and the power of Christ by his Spirit in the hearts of his elect; but for want of this it is that one lives loosely, and another falls foully, and never riseth; another falls secretly, and is never known, and dies in a dream, etc.; and that there is such miserable scrambling for promises; and that men are so worshiping whom they know not.

4. Consider the misery of the want of this.

But further.

Means 1. Be careful to get satisfaction by blood, before application by the Spirit; if ever you look for the latter, be careful to get the former; God is full of Spirit; why sends he it not? sin is not satisfied for; first get that done, therefore. John vi. 53, "Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood," etc. God could not send the Spirit nor Word but for this to thee; a man feels the strength of sin, and prays, Lord, subdue it; O, but look to pay thy ransom. If a man be in chains for debt, and gets out without satisfaction for the debt or wrong, he will be taken again; but if it be satisfied for, though he be taken by the jailer and ill entreated, yet he shall be set free again; and therefore do as those, Lev. iii. 3, 4. You are freely to go to sacrifice; and it is said, "It shall be accepted to make atonement."

Means 2. If the Lord withhold his Spirit, mourn for the want of it; as, (Ps. xli. 3,) "My tears are my meat."

Means 3. If the Lord gives any thing, be thankful for any little; see it, and make much of it, for it is from Christ, the least thought or knowledge of thy misery; (John xiv. 17,) "The world can not receive it, because it knows him not;" i. e., so as to prize it, love it, bless, and wonder at the Lord for it. "Thy Spirit is good; Lord, let it lead me," saith David.

Quest. What if I find not these things in my soul?

Ans. Mourn then.

Object. What if I can not?

Ans. Then muse on thy misery.

Object. But I can not.

Ans. Then hear what the Lord will speak.

Quest. What if he helps not?

Ans. Thou art unworthy, thou art his clay, he may and will do what he will.

Use 6. Of thankfulness to the saints who are apprehended of the Lord Jesus; you know him, and he knows you; you come to him, and he takes you; you give up yourselves to him, and he gives himself to you; you make him your God and head, and he makes you his people and members, etc.

Observ. 5. That the Lord Jesus, at his coming to death or judgment, will make a perfect separation between the wise and foolish virgins.

For the virgins were all one together till Christ comes; and now the one sort is received to Christ, the other separated from Christ; nay, not so much as known of Christ. There are not, have not been any churches in this life, but there will be wise and foolish, tares and wheat grow up together; not virgins and harlots, not openly profane (it may be) or wicked and godly; no, but when all are virgins in outward profession and conversation, yet then some will be wise, and some foolish in the sight of Christ, (though not in the sight of man,) and between these the Lord Jesus will make a separation at his coming. Matt. xxv. 31. "He shall set sheep and goats at his right and left hand." Matt. iii. 12. He shall thoroughly purge his floor, and separate chaff and wheat. 2 Thess. i. 9. Punished with eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord. The son of the bond woman must not be heir together with the son of the free woman, and therefore cast him out; they must part companies.

Quest. 1. Whither shall they be separated?

Ans. 1. At particular judgment; what became of the soul of Lazarus? It was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom; i. e., to the third heaven, where Abraham was, and to fellowship with him, dearly loved of him: what then becomes of the souls of others? they, being sentenced by God, are dragged down to hell by evil angels, and are reserved; where? they are reserved in the elements.

2. At general judgment; the elect shall be called to come and inherit their kingdom; and hence others shall be cast, with the devil and his angels, to eternal fire, which is there where the third heaven is not; and here shall they be parted, and never joined together more, which is fearful.

Quest. 2. Why will there be such a separation?

Ans. Reason 1. Because at Christ's coming they shall be immediately judged, and examined by Christ; he shall then make strict and immediate trial of them. Why do these foolish virgins creep in now? Is not Christ present with his people, ruling and judging among his people? Yes, but Christ judgeth now mediately by means of his servants; and hence he not giving, and they

not having perfect knowledge of the secrets of men's hearts, nor having perfect hatred of the evil and hypocrisy of men's hearts; hence they are not separated now, nor can not be (though the servants of God should be very watchful) so long as they can not see nor convince men of all their hypocrisy; some light and life he gives them to see beyond their own natural abilities, but it is not perfected; and hence his work is (as the instruments are) imperfect; but now, when Christ himself comes immediately to judge, and they fall into his hands, he can perfectly see all their secret evils; he hath his eyes like a flaming fire, and themselves shall know, and all churches shall know; nay, all the world shall know "that he is a God searching the hearts and reins," (1 Sam. xvi. 7;) and he perfectly hates hypocrisy; he regards not any man's person, or parts, or profession, or kindnesses, or relations, (which move us many times to accept whom he refuseth against some light,) but as it is. Is. lxi. 8, "He hates robbery in burnt offerings, and loves judgment;" and hence the more present Christ is with his people, the more able are they to discern, as Peter, the secrets of Ananias in the primitive times; or the Lord discerns for them, and by some unexpected way or other, little thought of to themselves, discovers them by their own mouths, or base actions; by their fruits you shall know them, (Matt. xxii. 12;) when the king came, he was speechless, whom the guests could not discern. So here, men have many things to say for themselves, who, when they come before Christ, will be struck dumb. A wise prince when he judgeth by inferior officers, they may discern of some cases; but if a king (as Solomon) was present, secrets which they see not would be found out; so here.

Reason 2. Because this is part of the curse upon hypocrites, to be cast out of the fellowship of the elect; secret sins do not only separate us from Christ, but from all our fellowship with the saints, which, next to separation from Christ, is the greatest evil in the world. It comforts the hearts of hypocrites, they are loved of good people, and liked of good people; and though privy to a world of filth, which a gracious heart is ashamed of, and loathes himself for, and thinks himself not worthy of a look of love from any of the least, yet hypocrites quiet themselves, if they can cover it from the eyes of God's people, (Matt. xxiv. 40,) but now they shall no longer rejoice under the shadow of these vines. No, the Lord will separate them to evil, (Deut. xxix. 21,) which is partly begun now, and perfected afterward; (Matt. viii. 11, 12,) they see Abraham and Isaac in God's kingdom, and mourn when themselves are cast out.

Reason 3. For the joy and comfort of the saints; for it is a wonderful joy to the heart to enjoy fellowship of saints alone: when in a sacrament we see profane people approach to it, it troubles us, grieves us; when we come to a place where we may be persuaded of the uprightness of all, it is very sweet; but now there is some fear, and hence less joy; but when we shall see the saints together, and say, These are they who are eternally beloved of Christ, dear to him, and to be with them, and be atone, this is very sweet; those that love together only, rejoice to be alone together; so saints, so Christ himself. 1 Thess. iv. *ult.* Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they that keep his commands, and may go to the city; for without are dogs, and those who make lies," etc.

Reason 4. In regard of the glory of Christ, and honor of Christ.

First. Hereby Christ's infinite wisdom, searching the secrets of all hearts, shall be seen, and that before all the world. 1 Cor. xiv. 25. It is said, when the secrets of men's hearts are discovered, they shall fall down and say, Verily "God is in you." Rev. ii. 23. "All churches shall know," etc. Why? are churches so ignorant of that? Yes, they believe it in the general; but they shall see it in the example, as well as in the rule, more fully afterward. We think he searcheth all hearts; but are there no hypocrites to be found in such and such churches? Yes, he shows some even in such; and the more secret and subtle any thing hath been, the more openly will the Lord reveal it, because this makes the more for him.

2. Hereby Christ shows his exceeding great love to his people, in parting them and others; (John xvii. 23,) "I in them, that the world may know," etc. Gen. vi. 8, "Noah found favor." Wherein was that shown? Ver. 7, "I will destroy man and beast;" but Noah found favor; and ver. 13, "make an ark."

3. Hereby he showeth his acceptance of the uprightness of the hearts and ways of his servants, which it may be are poor and mean in their own eyes, but precious in the sight of the Lord, above all the pompous furniture and pithless profession of hypocrites, (Mal. iii. 16, 18;) hence, (Matt. xxv.,) "Come, take the kingdom for you," etc. What is glorious in the world's, is vile in the Lord's eyes.

Use 1. Let none be then offended at the apostasy of men (eminent in profession) from the ways of God, in the purest and most reformed churches: what are these people (say some scorners) better than others? some of these make a greater show than others, and yet they fall: what are these churches better than others, where there is no such examination nor trial? and

these be your church members, and your holy people, and your covenanters, and thus men stumble. O, consider, in the purest churches there be many foolish, whom Christ will separate one from another; and therefore if Christ doth give a taste of this beforehand, and those that are vile before him, he makes them vile before others, that all Israel may see and fear, do not wonder at it. Is. xxxii. 5, 6, "The churl shall be no more called liberal, for he will speak, and think, and work so." Luke xii. 2, "Nothing secret but it shall be revealed," (many secret evils are hid,) but it shall be but in part here. Christ saw his disciples apt to be offended at the fall of Judas. Did not he know him? then he was not the Son of God; or if he did, why did he suffer him? Saith he, (John xiii. 18,) "He that eats bread shall lift up his heel against me, that the Scripture may be fulfilled;" and it is the portion of the churches and people of God to be troubled with such as these, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled; therefore be not offended; it ever hath been so in the primitive times, as well as in Christ's family; Paul foretells of wolves devouring the flock, arising out of themselves; and (2 Pet. ii. 1, 2) as there were, so there shall be false prophets; and Paul (though discerning) reckons his danger in regard of false brethren; and it is a heavy judgment of God, that that which should make a man adore the depth of Christ's wisdom, holiness, presence in his church, and fear his own heart and spirit, should offend men in the least measure; for surely these are warning to all the churches, and all men, and examples before our doors, as those are, 1 Cor. x. A man that is prescribing rules of art, he gives one or two examples; he could give twenty, but that is enough to make "the wise understand." Hos. xiv. 9.

Use 2. Hence see the fearful and sad condition of those who shall voluntarily separate themselves (and are glad of it) from the fellowship of the faithful; nay, the churches of Christ, they do but execute the divine sentence of Christ upon themselves in this life, which shall be passed upon them at the great day; they shall then be parted, and cast out of the family of God, the church of the first born, of which the churches on earth, in their purity, are a resemblance.

Look, as it is in sinning, a man departs from God, and executes upon himself that which shall be (though now it is not felt) his greatest doom; so it is in parting from the saints; they do but execute their sentence upon themselves; and hence, (1 John ii. 19,) "They went out from us, that it might be made manifest they were not all of us;" if ever they had portion in the saints, they would never have parted; not but that one may separate

from the incurable corruptions of a true church, and not but that one may remove from one church to another, provided it be with love, and utmost care for the good of that where he was; and also, not but that one may be forced upon some special cause to dwell in Meshech, and be forced to forsake sacrificing, to show mercy; but I speak of such forsaking wherein men voluntarily separate themselves from all the churches of God at least, though not the people of God, out of a base esteem of their fellowship, and a high esteem of something else which they shall have without it; they regard not communion of saints, no further than it may serve their turn; and when it will not serve their turn, then they forsake it.

This separation, it commonly ariseth from certain preparations to it, which are the loosenings of a man's heart from God's people; like the apple, before it falls, it begins to grow loose from that which holds it. I shall briefly show how this is, that you may be watchful; many not yet fallen, but their hearts sit loose from churches, and fellowship of saints, and people of God, even when they think their hearts sit close to Christ; and I will not name all, — for particular men have their particular temptations, — but what is most common; and this is one secret sin, and plague of men in these churches, and there will be rendings; Christ's work is to gather, and Satan's, ever quite contrary, to scatter; and it is a rule, What is Christ's greatest work, the contrary is Satan's chiefest; as when Christ is humbling, he is hardening; when drawing to believe, he to unbelief; when Christ's work is to gather and unite, his is to scatter, loosen, and divide; with that foot Christ treads on Satan most, there he bites most.

1. The Lord withdraws that honor and love from a man, which either he looks for, or thinks he deserves from the hands and hearts of God's people; either they are not lovely, or not loving to others; when they have either no personal worth to purchase love, or they have nothing to give of love in exchange for love; or else (to try them) the Lord for a time leaves his people to a blockishness of spirit; their love waxeth cold, or they think they are not honored, or have not enough; and so (if men do not make) Satan will make them scandals to themselves through their pride of spirit. 1 Sam. xv. 35. Saul desired, "Honor me before the people;" but Samuel came not to Saul; hence what did Saul do? You never read that he came to or made use of Samuel again. We are united to Christ by faith, but to the saints by love, and mutual love. Eph. iv. 16. Take away this mutual love, that you love not others, or they love not you, unless you have Christ's Spirit, which was in Paul

and all the faithful, (2 Cor. xi. 16,) you will fall secretly; and hence, (Heb. x. 24, 25,) "Provoke one another to love and good works;" say to one another, Pray, brother, tell me of my faults, and your fears; I will tell you my heart again, etc. Truly here is the temptation of some, if not of most, to apostasy from the Lord and his servants; and this is the guise of hypocrites, let any godly not honor them, they despise them; let any ungodly honor them, if they be not extremely vile, they love them and their fellowship, and are ready to think them as honest as the best, because they make themselves their own gods; those that honor them are their good angels, and *e contra*.

2. They begin to feel, by woful experience, no spiritual good, or power of the spirit and presence of the Holy Ghost in their fellowship, or in these ordinances in it; they have them, but not the use nor comfort of them, and this sets them going, and ripens and rots them for a fall; for as want of love made them sit loose from the persons, so this makes them sit loose from the ordinance; and a man thinks now, What am I the better for the purity of ordinances? and so, hence, when he should loathe his heart, he loathes the truth, and ways he seems to approve, and hence falls. For this is a standing rule, Let a man have ordinances, and not know how to use them, or not indeed make spiritual use of them, if he knows it, but he will sit loose from them. Mal. iii. 14; Zach. xi. 8. "My soul abhorred them, and they abhorred me;" not their own hearts; as it is with the soul and body, they are not knit one to the other immediately, but by spirits, which if they be extinct, then they fall asunder. Let a man have meat and it not feed him, clothes that can not warm him, physic that can not purge him, a vineyard planted that never hath fruit on it, he will cast them off, and despise them; and this is the second step, the heaviest judgment of God on men for not loving the truth, but taking pleasure in unrighteousness; and this works thus especially, if they have had some trial of the people of God sometime; and after great expectations of receiving good from them, meet with but little; the word, sacraments, fastings, hence come to be stones, not bread; the heaven of promises is iron, and there is no rain falls on them; and hence they, 1. Carelessly refuse at some times to come to the fellowship of the saints. 2. Hence, if they do come, they come late. 3. If timely, yet without prayer, or prizing of them; they have felt no good, and now they expect little. 4. If conscience force to duties, yet they think them too tedious, or too frequent. Ezek. xi. 21. They are losing and dying; no man will tell you so particularly, but the Lord tells thee so now.

3. The Lord visits them with many sad and outward evils, and strange, unexpected trials, which they thought they could bear, but indeed can not, puts them upon great losses and leaves them to sad wants, their estates decay, they run into debt, and provisions are scarce, etc.; and now they secretly repent themselves of the fellowship of God's people, but account their course, and hazards they have run, either madness or rashness. "Moses (Heb. xi. 25) did choose affliction and suffering," that he lotted upon, and upon nothing else; hence forsook honor, and preferments, and pleasures; men not doing thus hence choose the world, and forsake the ways of God; the Israelites brought to the wilderness, they would go back: why? they questioned whether God was with them: why? because they wanted water, bread, and variety of blessings. Numb. xvi. 13, 14. And this sets them off; as a man that loves his friend very well, but when he puts him to so much cost, and is so costly by his company, let him then even go; so do many men the Lord and his ordinances.

4. Hereupon they come to call all into question again, which were without question before, the ways and ordinances of God. What warrant now, say they, have you for covenant, such constitution of churches, of saints, strict examining of members? and why not a form of prayer? and why not a ceremony lawful? and now they want but a temptation, and then they fall. 2 Thess. ii. 10, "They receive not the truth in love:" why not? because they feel loss by the truth, or feel not the spiritual good of the truth, and hence are given up to believe lies; the first beginning of which is to question the truth; not from tenderness of conscience, though that be pretended, but from carnal lust; and hence, (Ezek. xi. 21,) whose heart goes after that detestable thing, and this they are hardened in; if any good men by violence of temptation fall therein. Thus men fall from fellowship, and sit loose; you will fall, if you look not to it, (which I say is fearful,) and as Christ said, "By this shall all know you are my disciples, if you love;" so all men shall know you are none of Christ's, if you fall here, if you sit loose, etc. I have been searching and discovering that which is working in sundry, and lies as leaven; cast it out of your doors.

Use 3. We may see hence one just ground of that diligent and narrow search and trial, churches here do or should make of all those whom they receive to be fellow-members with them; the Lord Jesus will make a very strict search and examination of wise and foolish, when he comes, and will put a difference between them then; may not men nor churches imitate the Lord Jesus according to their light now? if indeed all the congregation

of the baptized were holy, then, as Korah said, "they take too much upon them;" if Christ, at his coming, would make neither examination, nor separation, not only of people baptized at large, but of professors, and glorious professors, of his truth and name; if churches were not set to discern between harlots and virgins, foolish virgins and wise, as much as in them lies, that so some of the glory of Christ may be seen in his churches here, as well as at the last day, then the gate might be opened wide, and flung off the hinges too for all comers; and you might call the churches of Christ the inn and tavern of Christ to receive all strangers, if they will pay for what they call for, and bear scot and lot in the town, and not the house and temple of Christ only to entertain his friends. But, (beloved,) the church hath the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and what they bind and loose, following the example and rule of Christ, is bound and loosed in heaven, and they judge in the room of Christ. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; 2 Cor. ii. 10. Whom the church casts out, and bids depart to Satan, Christ doth; whom it receives, Christ doth, but such as have visible right to Christ, and communion of saints. None have right to Christ and his ordinances but such as shall have communion with Christ at his coming to judge the world; hence, if we could be so eagle-eyed as to discern them now that are hypocrites, we should exclude them now; as Christ will, because they have no right; but that we can not do; the Lord will therefore do it for his churches; yet let the churches learn from this to do what they can for the Lord now.

There is a fourfold glory of Christ shining in his separating foolish and wise at the last day; which when churches imitate now, they hold out now.

First. Hereby he shows his wisdom, in discovering the secrets of darkness, and all the wily knots men have tied, to hamper themselves in their own miseries; so churches show forth this wisdom, not only in discovering such whom you may feel to be hairy, rough Esaus with mittens on, but such as have Jacob's voice, and are wily; when the secrets of his spirit are discovered, they will say, if not proud and passionate, God is in you; hence the wisdom of Christ. Rev. ii. 2.

Secondly. Hereby the Lord Jesus shows his holiness, who withdraws himself from those that are foolish, though outwardly most glorious; for he will be sanctified; so the churches shadow out the holiness of Christ herein, who are bound to be holy as he is holy.

Thirdly. Hereby the Lord keeps the communion of his saints pure; this is a wonderful glory in heaven, that only the elect

and faithful of God shall lie down together, and is the last and greatest glory that ever shall be seen in this world. Rev. xxi. 27. One man or woman secretly vile, which the church hath not used all means to discover, may defile a whole church, and bring it under wrath, as Achan, and make work and sorrow enough for many a day and year after, and bring that blemish and scandal as will not easily be worn off again, and then men will wish that they had kept their communion pure.

Fourthly. Hereby the Lord abundantly vouchsafes his presence to his people in heaven, when the goats are separated; now come and take your fill of love, and possess your kingdom; so the church hereby gains more of the presence of Christ Jesus in public and private; when Judas is gone out, now Christ comforts the hearts of his disciples; when the Lord hath his spouse alone, he sports himself with her. Is. iv. *ult.* When all in Jerusalem are holy, there shall be a cloud and pillar of smoke on all their habitations. And therefore not only the churches should do thus, but a godly, holy heart will desire it; it is the end of his coming, that he may be searched; better had men be tried and examined now, than by Christ another day.

Object. 1. But we must look, not to what may be done, but to what must be done; churches have power to cast out them that be bad; but what power to keep out them that be baptized, and have a name to be good?

Ans. 1. Christ doth not only shut out harlots, but professing virgins; which example is to be imitated now so far as we can; for on the same ground Christ excludes, we have the same if we know them.

2. The apostle is punctual for it; (2 Tim. iii. 5,) speaking of the last days, "Having a form of godliness, turn away from such." He saith not, Let them in, and turn to them; and if they prove evil members, cut them off, and turn them from you; but turn away from them. He saith not, If they be profane, or not baptized, and can not say, I was humbled, and now I believe; but which is more, if they have a form, under whose garments of profession you will ever see some of those sores. Ps. ii. 3.

3. Rev. ii. 2. It was accounted part of the wisdom and power of grace of the Ephesine church which tried them, which said, they were apostles, and had found them liars. They could not creep in there, but they were found out.

4. In the Jerusalem come down from heaven, it is part of the glory of it to cast out the unclean; but (Rev. xxi. 27) "nothing enters therein which is unclean;" and are not they to be imitated now in their glory, who are set out for that end?

5. To omit all other proofs, see Ezek. xliv. 8, 9. The apostle gives a sad charge; (Heb. xii. 15,) "Look diligently, lest a root of bitterness grow up;" the apostle doth not say, It is no matter what roots you set in Christ's garden; only when they spring up, and begin to feed and infect others, then have a care of them; but look there be not a root there; truly so we do; for they tell us they believe and repent, and we believe them; other strict inquiry we make not. O, but saith he, Look diligently to it; it is ill counsel to the gardener to say, Have a care to weed your garden; but it is no matter; God looks not that you should be careful of your seed, so long as it be seed; nay, the Lord that forbids me to suffer weeds to grow, forbids my carelessness in sowing what seeds I please.

It is the judgment of some divines, that the first sin of Adam and his wife was in suffering the serpent to enter into the garden uncalled for; the ruin of a church may be the letting in of some one ill member.

Object. 2. But they that are innocent, and say they believe, are in the least degree of probability converted; and the best, we are but certain of their conversion in the highest degree of probability; and therefore may both sorts be admitted?

Ans. No; Paul may fear with a godly jealousy some of the Corinthian church, (2 Cor. xii. 20, 21,) and may know some to be childish, and carnal, and weak, yet children; yet he calls them all saints, and dares not mince his speeches with such notions of probability; and, (Heb. vi. 9,) "We are persuaded better things of you." A moral certainty a man may have, and should have, of all church members; a certainty of faith, conditional, though not absolute; as if it be thus as they say, and I can not, ought not, to say otherwise of them, it is well with them.

Object. 3. But the primitive church never received in any with such strict confessions, and large examinations; three thousand in a day were admitted.

Ans. I remember a godly divine, in answering an objection of late repentance from the example of the thief; having whipped it with many other rods, at last lasheth it with this; it is an extraordinary case; and hence not to be brought in for an ordinary example; hence he speaks thus: When, therefore, the time comes that Christ shall come and be crucified again, and thou one of the thieves to be crucified with him, and it fall out that thou be the best of the two, then shalt thou be saved by Christ, that, despising Christ now, puts off thy repentance till then; so I say here; there is somewhat imitable and ordinary in the apostles' example, in admitting three thousand in a day,

but something unusual, and far different from our condition now; and therefore this I would say when the time comes, that the Spirit is poured out on all flesh; and that time is known to be the spring tide, and large measure of the Spirit, when ministers are so honored as to convert many thousands at a sermon; and so God and reason call for quickness when elders of churches are as sharp sighted as the apostles; when the conversion of men also shall be most eminent, and that in such places where it is death or half-hanging to profess the Lord Jesus, as that they shall be pricked at their hearts, gladly receive the word, lay down their necks on the block, cast down all their estates at the churches' feet out of love to God's ordinances; when men shall not have Christian education, the example and crowd of Christians from the teeth outwardly to press them to the door of the church, as those times had not; then, for my part, if three hundred thousand were converted, I should receive them as gladly and as manifestly as they receive Christ; but, truly, there is such little takings now, that we have leisure enough to look upon our money; and the hypocrisy of the world gives us good reason to stay and see; yet we grant Simon believes also; and if he doth deceive the apostles' eyes for a time, let him come in, and tell him of his gall of bitterness afterward; and if he be not obstinate, but entreats prayers, charity hopes the best, and lets him stay in. Matt. iii. 7.

Object. 4. But you may, in weeding out the tares, pull up the wheat, and keep out the godly in such strict searchings.

Ans. 1. It is true; and the want of tenderness and love to them that be Christ's lambs and babes, having much ignorance and carnalness, out of zeal in some, not guided aright; and pride in others, despising those that are of meaner gifts than themselves; or because of some weaknesses, which if they were convinced of, would soon lament and amend; and to be so rigorous toward them, will not be suffered by Jesus Christ, if continued in by churches; hence churches must be watchful against this: and then, —

2. If they follow the light, are weak with them that are weak, and strong with them that be strong, and are all things to all men, and gain all to Christ; look as the receiving of ill members shall not be laid to their charge to hurt them, so nor the excluding of some that are good. And this I will add, the Lord may see in some good people, that are about to join themselves to the church, that which makes them fit to destroy a church, not to build up a church; as in case of some secret sin not sufficiently repented of, and some decay of the first love. (Rev.

ii. 5,) and the Lord by this means may recover them by word or rod under witness of the church against them; and hence many say, If I had then come in, I should have been proud and vile.

Object. 5. But there are many odd confessions by those that are received, and extravagant, enlarged discourses of the set time of their conversion, and their revelations, and ill application of Scripture, which makes such long doings, and are wearisome and uncomely.

Ans. So I would say, there may be many weaknesses in an ordinance; shall I therefore despise or cast off an ordinance? I could then cast away all, and my own life, and soul too when I had done; no, lament them and heal them. I confess it is not fit that so holy and solemn an assembly as a church is, should be held long with relations of this odd thing and the other, nor hear of revelations and groundless joys, nor gather together the heap, and heap up all the particular passages of their lives, wherein they have got any good; nor scriptures and sermons, but such as may be of special use unto the people of God, such things as tend to show, Thus was I humbled, then thus I was called, then thus I have walked, though with many weaknesses since; and such special providences of God I have seen, temptations gone through; and thus the Lord hath delivered me, blessed be his name, etc.

I have done: let all God's people, watchmen on God's walls, still be watchful and careful; there be temptations enough to make men fill and pester God's house with swine; one hath his friend, and his affection leads him; another, he is a man of estate, and his money is in the mouth of his sack; another thinks there is one bad enough, but we shall do well enough with them; O, take heed of these things; methinks a godly man should abhor the opinion, at least, if it was but for this reason, viz., it is so suitable: *First.* To a proud man; shall I stoop to churches, and give an account of my heart and course to them? I am as good as they. *Secondly.* To apostates from churches; who when they are gone, then they give way to these conceits. You are too strict, and are loth to confess their falls afterward. *Thirdly.* And libertines, who cry out, Why shut you your gates so close, that swine and sheep, sheep and goats, and all their herds and herdsmen come not in? No, the Lord will separate one day; do what you can therefore, you that are in Christ's stead now.

Use 4. Boast not of church privileges only; I am a church member, and now all is well; say not, "We have Abraham to our

father;" cry not, The temple of the Lord, and all the Christians in the church think well of me; for Christ Jesus will make a separation one day, (all is not fish that comes to the net,) and then better never have known what church fellowship means, and yet be all the while a stranger to Christ; thou thinkest all have given their approbation of thee; so in charity they may; but yet it may be some have had secret fears, and doleful thoughts of thy estate; and what have they done? Even as we do with those we can not cast by any inferior courts; we put them over to be tried by the highest court of the kingdom; and that is very dreadful if their case be bad; so here; one thinks it a shame to live out, and hence, for to serve his honor, sets himself up there; another wants marriage, and that is the way to it; another thinks of his gain in a town, in fields, or in shop, hence desires it; another's conscience is only troubled for want of a sacrament, hence would come in, and there they sit still; O, take heed of this.

Use 5. Hence see there is need of conversion in some church members: Did you ever see a church member converted? said one, as if then the bitterness of death was past, when once in the church; some should look about them herein; I will only give this rule: Be always converting, and be always converted; turn us again, O Lord. When a man thinks, I was humbled and comforted, I will not lay all by, and so live on old scraps. O, beware of that frame; not that a Christian should be always pulling up foundations, and ever doubting; but to make sure, be always converting, more humble, more sensible of sin, more near to Christ Jesus; and then you that are sure may be more sure; and you that are not may be sure indeed.

Use 6. Of thankfulness to all God's people called to Christ, that he should make a separation between you and others; this is the wonder and diamond of God's ring of love compassing all the saints, in separating them from others. Mal. i. 1–3, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? yet I loved one and hated the other." Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68, "He chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but Judah;" and there was Sion, and there David; so for the Lord to choose thee, and leave so many thousands in the world, is mercy; but to choose thee, and leave many of the town where thou livest, that is more; that had some means, and were better in birth, place, and parts, than thou; but to choose thee from thy friends, two grinding in a mill, and lying in a bed, one taken, the other left, is more; but of professors, and glorious ones too, whom thou dost highly esteem, to choose thee, and leave them; to open to thee, and shut the door against them, this is indeed

wonderful. If thou art one of these, he hath made thee thankful for it: O, this is the mark and crown of glory, and fruit of the Lord's old love, for his opening of thy eyes, and changing thy heart, and giving thee rest and peace on his Son.

Ver. 13. *Watch.*

Observ. That all the churches of God are bound to be very watchful, by considering the parable of these foolish virgins.

Quest. 1. Against what shall they watch?

Ans. 1. Against security, and dead-heartedness.

2. Against slightness and shallowness of the work of grace in them.

Quest. 2. For what should they watch?

Ans. For the blessed appearing and glorious coming of Christ Jesus. At his first coming, (1 Pet. i. 10–12,) they searched after and waited for his coming, and rejoiced to see that day; so should we now for his second.

Use. Of exhortation to these churches in New England. O, be watchful.

First. Against security: Motives.

1. Because it is the last sin, as you have heard, which surpriseth saints; a Christian, at first conversion, strives and gets mastery over many sins, but some are very hard, that he can not overcome them; and because he can not, hence, like the Israelites, he is ready to think the worst is past, and I can not be better; and hence lies secure, and makes truce with sin.

2. It is a very dangerous sin; what temptation may not a man fall into, and be overcome with, when he is sleepy and secure? A strong man that is asleep, may not a child, any weak enemy, cut his throat, or pick his pockets? it may be when awakened he may recover his losses, but it is sad for the present with him; so here.

3. It is a most bewitching sin; because nothing is so sweet as sleep, and the sweeter the stronger, and the worse.

4. It is the temptation of this place. 1. Because, when churches grow secure, then all begin to slumber; else one might awaken all. 2. Because here is peace; we have our ease, and our pillows, and feather beds, and are out of the noise of persecution, and hence sleep, and watch not; are secure, and dead-hearted, and pray not; our hearts die, and prayers die by this means. 3. Because of many sad wearisome trials and heavy loads; it is hard to live for some, and their bodies are weak, and cares and distractions many, and griefs from servants' rude-

ness, etc., exceeding, and debts come upon men, and sorrow made the disciples' eyes heavy. Luke xxii. 45. The poor laden horse when spur-galled, and the load heavy, and legs weary, he will lie down in the highway till rest and provender be given him.

5. O, therefore blessed are ye if you endure temptation, and watch one hour in this place and time. I tell you, the Lord will set thee down, and serve thee, and give thee what thou callest for.

Secondly. Against slightness, and a hoverly work. Motives:

1. Many, looking after Christ, deceive themselves here; here is their wound; they have some taste of sin's bitterness, and some taste of Christ, and some affections; but the life of Christ they want; not that all must have the same measure; but consider of what hath been opened to you: O, these colors, forms, and figures, and images, and pageants, and pictures, and names, and paints, and gildings, are the undoing of many.

2. Consider the example of David, who, though a prophet, yet desires, "O that I might see the Lord in his house!" Paul reached after more and more; as for his prize, he made work of it.

3. Christ is full, and hath enough Spirit; O, therefore, seek for more! if you know this gift, and ask, he will give rivers of waters: young Christians, look to yourselves as you wax old; what is become of your gold? why doth copper appear now, in comparison of what it hath been (it may be) formerly?

Thirdly. For Christ's coming: Motives.

1. This is the beginning of glory; Adam looked only for his happiness in an earthly paradise, but you are heirs of a heavenly. Tit. ii. 13.

2. You have nothing else to look for; if only of the things of this world you might look for your portion here, it were another matter; but now when called, justified, sanctified, sin warring against thee, and nothing but thy body and breath between thee and Christ; O, look after it.

3. Sorrows in the country cry for it; we think within a few years the land will be out of heart, and want of clothes, or not money to buy, or pay debts, and this and the other evil will ensue; so for particular persons, what shall I do hereafter? etc. True, but glory will pay for all at Christ's coming.

4. All saints ever looked for this long ago; the Corinthians, (1 Cor. i. 7,) and the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. i. *ult.*,) and the Philippians, (Phil. iii. 20, 21:) grace teacheth men so to do, (Tit. ii. 13,) and promise of mercy is made to such only, (Heb.

ix. *ult.*;) and hence (Rev. xxii.) the church cries out, "Come, Lord, come quickly;" O, wait for this time when he shall redeem, comfort, glorify, free from all snares and sins, if no hope in this life, of all men most miserable; some young ones think it is too soon; old men that are near do it; many have businesses, and can not; can not you carry it to the fields and rejoice in expectation of this, but must be always cast down, etc.? O, teach it your children, speak of it one brother to another; some of you are poor and mourning; O, be comforted; it is for your sake Christ will come, and refresh, and wipe away your tears.

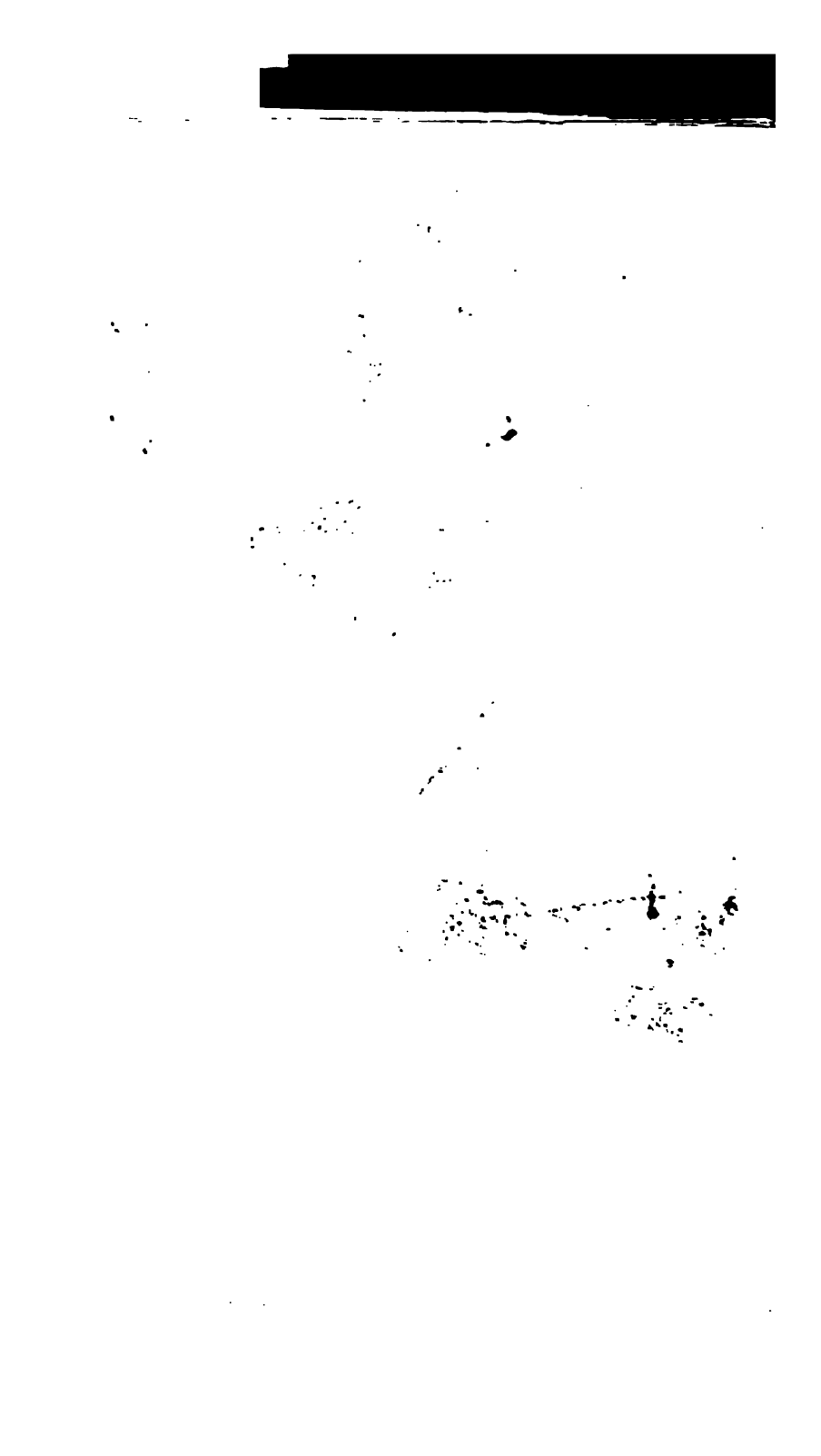
Thus I have finished this parable; there are divers and many interpretations hereof given by some, but I speak what I believe; I differ in nothing but ever gave reason.

And verily if you regard not, the Lord shall bring all these things as witnesses against you another day; I believe it shall not be without some fruit; give him the glory that gives it.

END OF VOLUME II.

[illegible] education
[illegible] - similes
[illegible] consumption image - extended - Diligence of Spirit.
81
86
91 - [illegible] 107
92.
[illegible] - look at science
99 - peace?
[illegible] - [illegible] fall.
[illegible] - [illegible] of [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] (good [illegible] form)

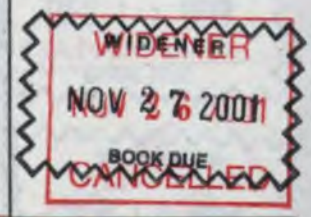
[illegible] - [illegible]!
120
123
[illegible]
126
129 - explaining simile
[illegible]



The borrower must return this item on or before the last date stamped below. If another user places a recall for this item, the borrower will be notified of the need for an earlier return.

Non-receipt of overdue notices does ***not*** *exempt the borrower from overdue fines.*

Harvard College Widener Library
Cambridge, MA 02138 617-495-2413



Please handle with care.
Thank you for helping to preserve library collections at Harvard.